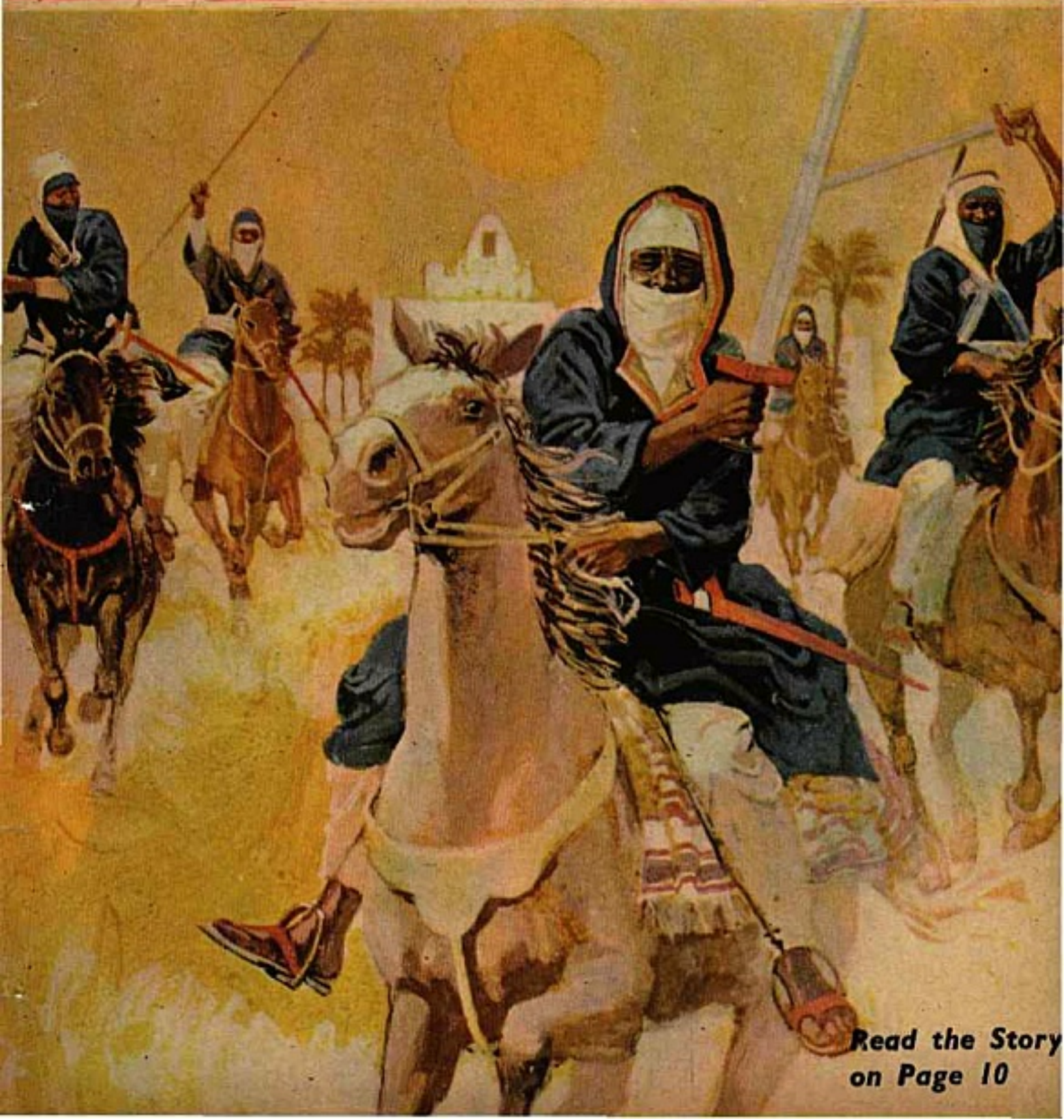


CHANDAMAMA

MAY 1973

90 PAISE



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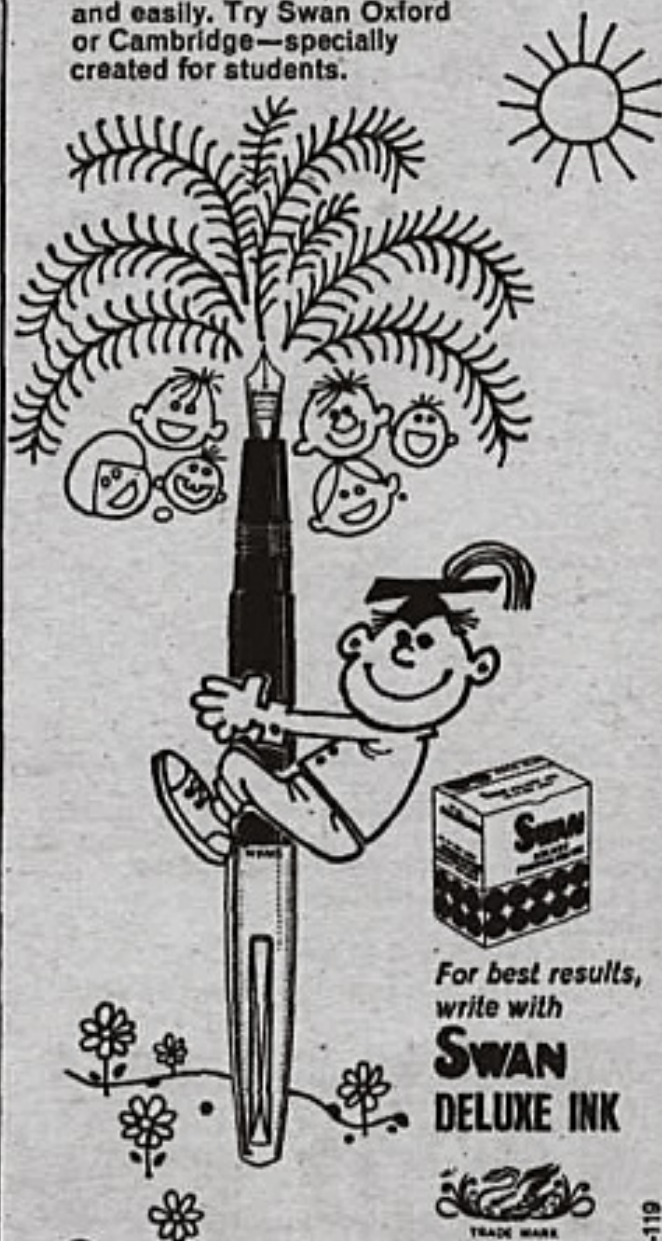
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CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 3 No. 11 May 1973

Special in this Issue

**The prize winning stories of our
Short Story Contest, for you to enjoy**

THE DIAMOND SMUGGLERS

by Shashi Tharoor

*THE PRINCESS WHOSE HAIR
WOULD NOT CURL*

by Vasanti Dedhia

THE VAIN BUTTERFLY

by P. Balasundaram

**Plus twelve more entertaining stories
and features**

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THE SEVEN HORSES

A certain farmer lived near a forest with his two sons, Jai and Vijay. He was very poor and was hard put to feed his family properly. One day Jai, the older lad, unable to stand this misery any longer, determined to go and see the king and request him to give him a job. So off he went to the king's palace.

The king was a stern man. But he heard Jai's recital patiently and then said, "Well, lad, I'll give you a task. If you can accomplish it successfully, you can even marry my daughter. But if you don't and tell lies, I'll have you whipped until your skin flakes off. Now listen carefully. I have seven horses which have to be taken out to graze.

You must watch what they eat and drink and then report to me."

Jai replied loftily, "Is that all, your Majesty? I'll take the horses out tomorrow morning and report to you in the evening."

Next morning, Jai went to the royal stables and driving the horses before him set out for the grazing grounds. The horses began to trot, but soon gathered speed and went galloping with Jai in hot pursuit.

Soon the horses disappeared in the distance.

Jai ran on and on and at last utterly tired out stopped before the door of a quaint looking cottage. An old woman hobbled out and seeing the lad, said "Lad, you seem very tired.

Come into my house and rest awhile."

Jai needed no second invitation. Soon he was chatting gaily with the old woman and wolfing down the food she offered. Then he thought of the horses and asked the old woman "Tell me, Grandma, what do the royal horses eat and drink?"

"Why silly, they eat grass and drink water, of course! I've seen the horses you mention. They go by this way in the morning and return the same way in the evening. You can stay here until they return," said the old dame. So Jai slept some and woke up in the evening to see the horses trotting past docilely. Then he returned to the palace and found the king waiting for him.

"Well, lad, did you look after my horses carefully? Now tell me, what did they eat and what did they drink?"

Jai replied, "Sire, they ate grass and drank water."

The king's brow darkened on hearing these words and angrily shouting for his attendants ordered that Jai should be whipped mercilessly.

After some time, Jai tottered home, his body covered with large welts and bleeding all over.

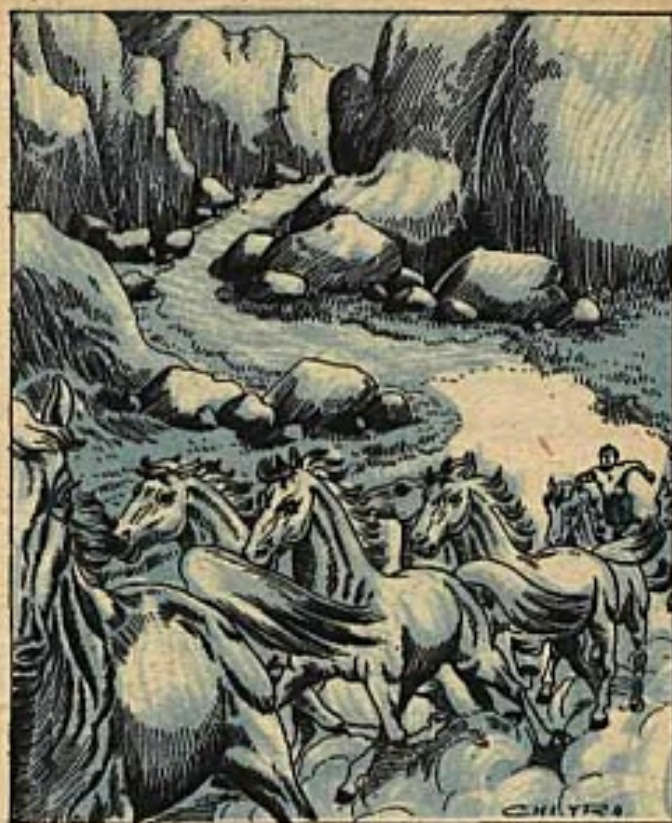


Vijay, the younger son heard Jai's tale of woe and decided to try his luck with the king. So boldly he went to the king and declared that he was prepared to carry out the king's bidding. After sternly warning him of the consequences of failure, the king allowed him to drive the royal horses out of the stables.

The horses soon broke into a thunderous gallop but Vijay ran on fleetfooted as the animals. The horses ran past the cottage of the old woman who hailed Vijay with the words, "Lad, lad, tarry here awhile." But the brave lad all unheeding and mindful of his task ran on

without stopping. Realizing that the horses would soon outdistance him, he seized the tail of the last horse and vaulted on its back. In this fashion, the horses and Vijay reached an abandoned temple in the middle of the forest. As they clattered into the courtyard of the temple a miraculous transformation took place. The seven horses changed into seven handsome princes, the king's sons.

The eldest prince smiled at the bewilderment of Vijay and then said, "Know lad that we are the king's sons. A sorceress changed us into horses. When we come into this temple, we change back into our usual sel-



ves. That is why we come here everyday, live for a short while as humans and then return home as horses. Our father, the king has promised to marry off our sister to the one who can tell him what we do. You seem to be a brave lad. So go and tell the king what you've seen. Besides this, bring out the sword that lies behind this idol. This night you must cut off our heads. Then the spell will be broken and we'll regain our original forms."

Vijay watched carefully what they ate and drank and then went to fetch the sword. But it was so heavy that he could hardly lift it. Then the eldest

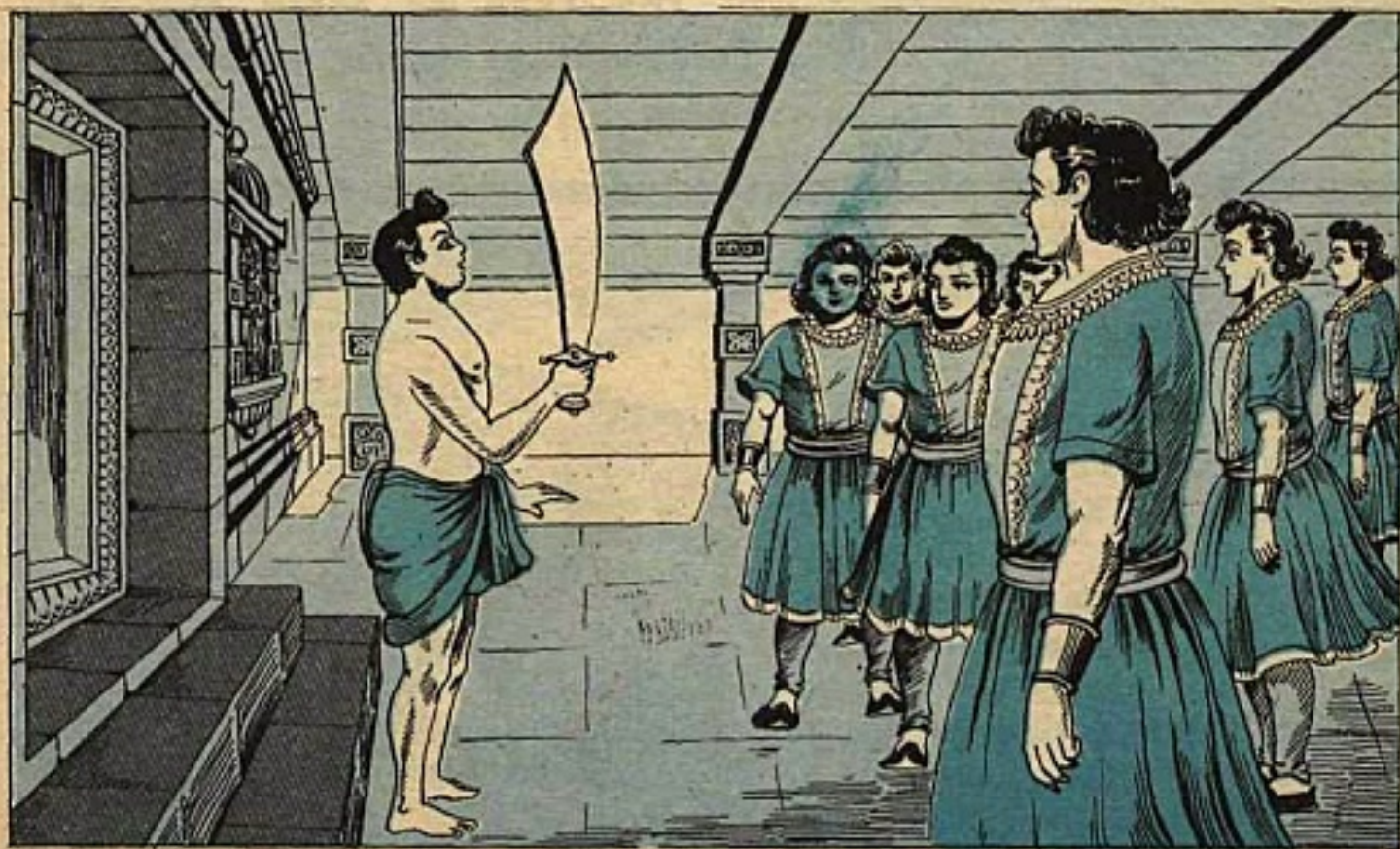
prince advised him to drink the waters of the temple pond and try again. Vijay did as he was told and this time he could draw out the sword easily. When the princes stepped outside the temple, they turned into horses again. Vijay astride on one led the way and soon they swept past the old dame's cottage. Upon sighting him and the horses, the old woman screeched out harshly. "Why, you naughty lad, you are trying to brake the spell I put on these worthless princes! Come here at once, I say, come here at once."

But Vijay did not deign to reply and pushed on towards

the royal palace. After leading the horses into the stables, he went in search of the king. When the king saw Vijay, he asked anxiously, "Well, lad, what did the horses do. Tell me quickly."

Vijay replied, "Sire, they ate like human beings, and drank the waters of a temple pond and prepared all kinds of wondrous juices."

The king was overjoyed to hear this. So he said, "Excellent you are a brave lad, I can see. I shall now make arrangements for my daughter's wedding to you."



THE STORY OF THE COVER

WARRIORS OF THE DESERT



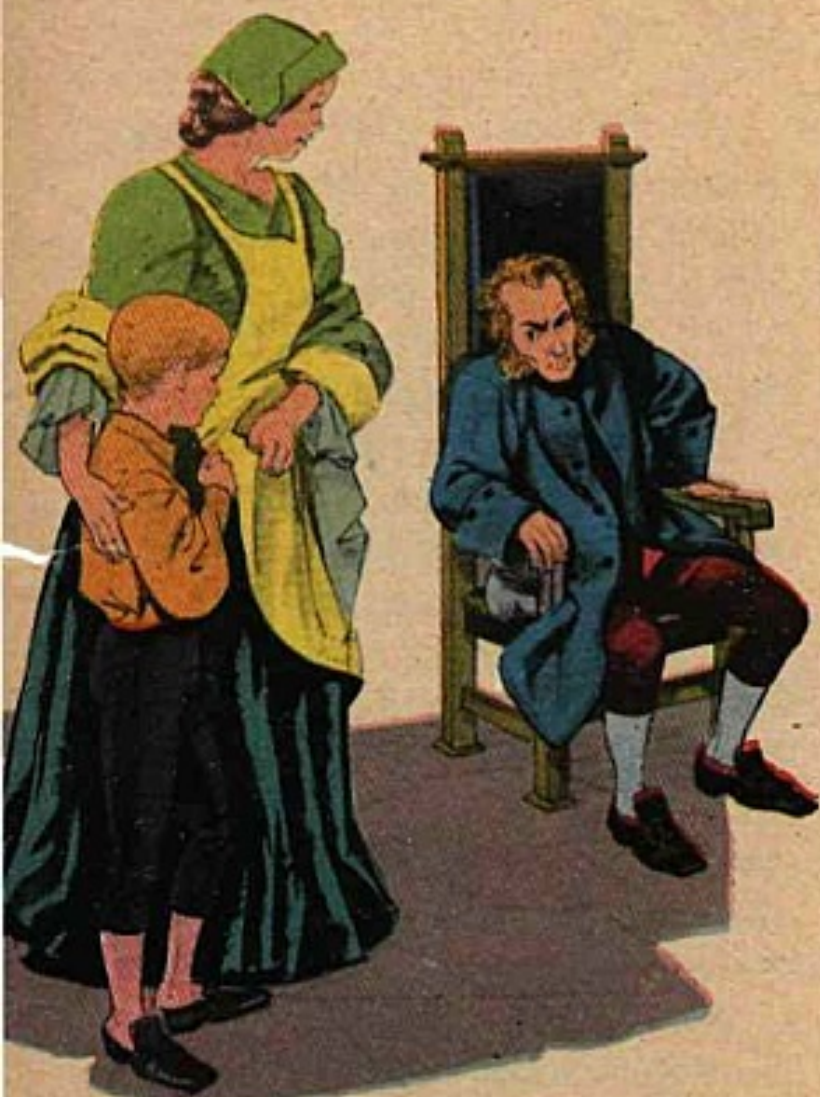
THE fierce-looking fighting men on our cover are called Touaregs and they live in the middle of the Sahara desert. But they fight only when they think it is necessary; their usual occupation is rearing sheep, goats and dromedaries (one-humped camels). The Touareg men wear a characteristic head-dress which consists of a long piece of white, or indigo, cotton wound round the head and passed across the lower part of the face to form the veil. This veil is worn even during sleep.

WHICH IS THE WORLD'S BIGGEST BEAR?

There are three huge bears, the Polar bear, the Peninsular brown bear and the Kodiak bear. Of these three, the Alaskan Peninsular bear is believed to be the largest. A bear of this kind could weigh as much as 1,850 lb. and be over 10 feet tall. Bear cubs at birth are very small.



The Boy who Understood Animals



"What have you learnt at your new college?" asked his father.

In Switzerland, a long time ago, there lived a boy named Alois, who was the son of a farmer. One day, when Alois came home from school he found out that his father had decided to send him to a college in far-off Basle, one of the towns of Switzerland. His father told him that the village school could no longer teach him anything new, so he must go to college. Alois agreed to go and his father sold his prize cow to help pay for the lessons.

For the next year Alois studied at the college in Basle and when the school term ended in the Summer, he returned to his parents, to help them on the farm.

"How tall you have grown," said his mother, when she opened the door to greet him, "but you look very pale. Never mind, once you start working on the farm again the colour will soon come back into your cheeks."

"What have you learnt at your new college?" asked the young boy's father.

"Many things," replied Alois. "I know now what the frogs are saying to one another."

His father was very annoyed by this answer. He thought that if this was all his son had learnt at the expensive college he might just as well have stayed at home and worked on the farm.

All that Summer Alois toiled in the fields, cutting wheat and looking after the cattle. When the time came for the new term to start Alois's mother managed to persuade his father that the boy should be given another chance. "Perhaps," thought his father, "he will learn something this time."

The next day, Alois returned to Basle to continue his studies. Another year passed and soon, it was time for him to return to his parents' farm again.

When he reached the front door his father opened it to greet him and his first words were, "What have you learnt at the college this year, my son?"

"I have learnt many things," replied Alois. "I

know now what the dogs are saying when they are talking to one another."

His father was furious and was sure that Alois was wasting his time at the college. He made Alois work even harder in the fields and around the farm, but at the end of the Summer he was persuaded to pay for Alois to return to college once more.

At the end of the third year Alois returned home and his father said to him, "Now my son, you must be a scholar after all this time. Tell me, what have you learnt?"

"Father," replied Alois, "this time I have learnt the language of the fish and I know now what they are saying."

"This is too much," said his father, clasp ing his head in his hands. "You will stay on this farm instead of wasting your time in Basle. We could do with the extra help at harvest time."

All through the long, hot Summer Alois worked on the farm. One day, he was in a field tying up sheaves of wheat, when two strangers stopped by the gate and called out to him.

Alois stopped his work and went across the field to ask what

they wanted. One of the strangers was very fat and the other was very thin and when he reached the gate the fat one said, "We are going to the town of Sion to see the election of the new president. We hope that one of us will be elected as the leader of the country. Two is company on the road, but three would be merrier. Why not join us and come and try your luck in the elections? Besides, you can show us the way to the town of Sion."

Alois said he would go with the two strangers and his father agreed to let him go. "After

all, the young scallywag might as well try to do something worthwhile in his life," thought his father.

The three men set off and soon Alois was great friends with both of them. They were such gay and pleasant companions and they could talk on any subject that you cared to name.

The next day the three travellers ate their lunch beside a peaceful pond. Suddenly, just as the three friends were settling down for a quick nap, Alois heard two voices talking behind him. One said, "It is a holy



wafer. If the minister knew about this he could give it to the old woman and save her life."

"Yes, that is true," agreed the other voice. Alois turned round just in time to see a frog diving into the pond and another sitting on a big lily leaf with a large, round biscuit in its mouth, a holy wafer.

Alois thought no more about the conversation he had overheard and that night, after walking all afternoon, the three men stopped to rest at a local inn.

It was very dark and silent inside the inn and Alois asked one of the servants why everyone was so sad. The servant told him that their mistress was very ill and she was not expected to live the night. As soon as he heard this, Alois ran all the way back to the pond and fetched the holy wafer he had seen the frog holding in his mouth. The old lady took one bite from it and she became quite merry and lively. She had made a marvellous recovery and she wanted to give them all a reward, but Alois would only take three silver coins, because he wanted to hear them jingle in his pocket.

The next evening, after a

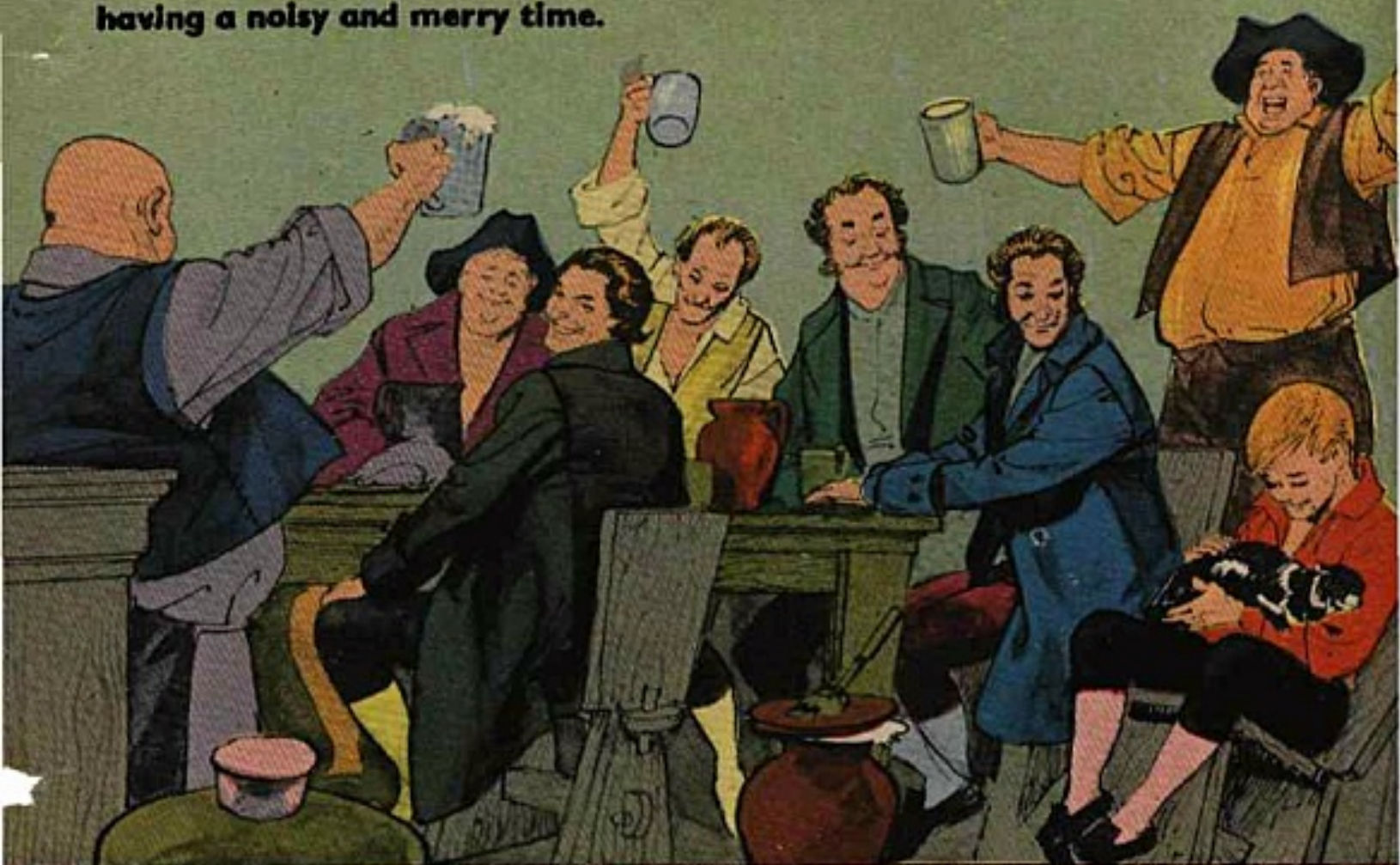
long and tiring journey on the road to Sion, they all stopped at an inn for the night. There was a crowd of noisy peasants inside having a merry time for they had just finished bringing in the harvest. After the three friends had eaten and joined in the merriment, they went upstairs to their rooms to sleep.

Alois, however, could not sleep, because there were two dogs outside his window barking and howling. As he listened he could hear what the dogs were saying. He heard one dog tell his friend that there was a robber hiding in the inn and, when everybody was asleep, he was going to creep downstairs and open the door for eleven of his robber friends. Then they would steal everybody's money and belongings.

Alois rushed round to all the rooms and told everybody that at midnight they would be attacked by robbers. Sure enough, on the stroke of twelve the inn door was opened by the robber, but the peasants and the innkeeper were waiting there, with large sticks in their hands. They captured all the robbers and tied them all up.

The next day was very hot

**The inn was full of peasants
having a noisy and merry time.**



and before the three friends had walked far along the dusty road, they had become very thirsty. They stopped at a stream flowing by the roadside and bent down to drink. Suddenly, Alois said to his fellow travellers, "You see that fish over there, beneath that stone. Well, he is talking about us and he is saying that one of us will be elected as president of the country at Sion tomorrow."

The three friends continued their journey, dancing down the road arm in arm.

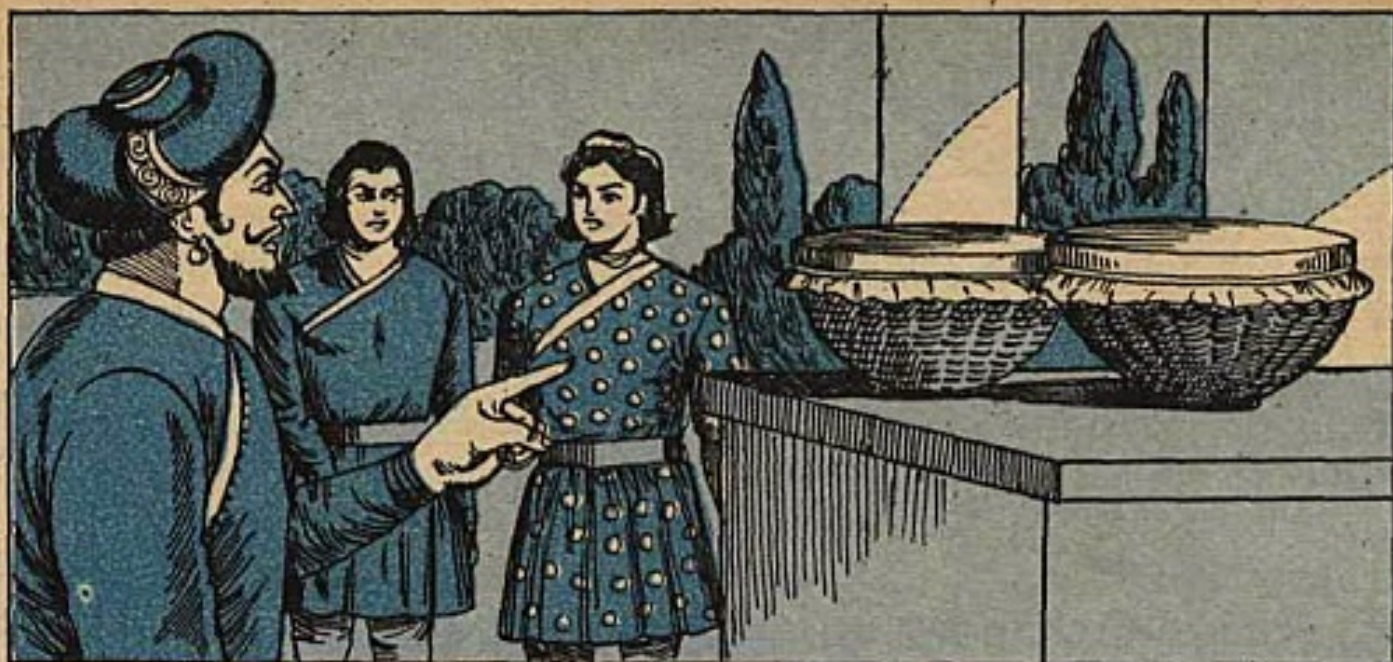
They entered the town of Sion and everywhere they went, people were talking about a young man who had performed amazing deeds and who had acted wisely. The three friends joined the crowds of people and thronged to the town hall. Suddenly, there was a fanfare of trumpets and the mayor of the town read out the result of



the election. Nobody was very surprised when Alois was elected as the new president. Nobody that is, except for Alois and his two friends. He had been elected because the stories of his amazing deeds had become known throughout the length and breadth of the land. What a surprise the thin man and the fat man had when they realised that the little fish in the pond had been telling the truth. Neither of them had

suspected that Alois of all people would become the new president. However, being good and kind friends, they congratulated the young man and everybody gave a cheer for the new president, who had become famous almost overnight.

"What a surprise my father will have when he finds out how helpful the frogs, the dogs and the fishes have been," said Alois to himself.



TEST TO MERIT

The King of Malwa had introduced some kind of a service commission examination to select suitable men for higher posts in the government. Those selected would be sent to the chief minister, the chancellor of the exchequer and the chief of military staff for adequate training before being appointed to their posts.

Once two young men were sent to the minister. Of the two, only one would be appointed. Kanda and Vinda, that was their names, were both able and clever. The minister after a great deal of thought

hit upon an idea. He gave each one a full basket and asked them to deliver it to two different people in two villages. They were to bring back signed receipts from the recipients.

Kanda and Vinda set out in two different directions.

Vinda had to travel quite some distance. Very soon he was tired out in the blazing sun and so rested under a tree. Feeling rather curious, he opened the basket and discovered two hundred Jelebis packed. Their aroma roused his hunger. Then he thought it was very unfair of the minister

to have sent him on without giving him a lunch packet. So decided to eat ten Jelebis from the lot in the basket. After all, there was no harm in that. He could always plead hunger as his excuse for the reduced number of Jelebis. So he ate ten, replaced the cover on the basket and journeyed along until he reached his destination. There he looked up the addressee, delivered the Jelebis and received a note saying that one hundred and ninety Jelebis had been received.

Kanda too had to travel a long way to reach his destination. On the way, he rested under a tree. Attracted by the aroma coming from the basket, he opened it and saw the round Jelebis. His mouth watered and his hunger became acute. But he could not eat any of them, because then the number of Jelebis would be less. So he thought about his hunger and his duty and at last resolved upon a trick. He broke off one outer circle from each Jelebi and began to eat. Thus his hunger was satisfied and the number of Jelebis remained the same.

Finally he resumed his journey and reached the village

where the addressee lived. He delivered the Jelebis and got a receipt certifying to the correctness of the number of pieces received.

Kanda and Vinda reported back to the minister. When Vinda was asked to account for the reduction in the number of Jelebis given to him, he frankly confessed what he had done.

As for Kanda, his receipt showed that he had delivered the correct number. Rather surprised, the minister asked him what he had done for lunch. So Kanda told him how he had satisfied his hunger without any loss to the actual number of Jelebis.



The minister wanted to test the two youths some more. So he had two trays full of ash brought and told the young men, "Kanda, deliver this to the King of Avanthi. Vinda, deliver this to the King of Anga."

After some time Vinda reached the court of the Anga king and said, "Sire, I have brought you a tray full of ash on the instructions of the Prime Minister of Malwa."

At this the King of Anga became furious, and said, "Indeed! guards, take this messenger and put him into prison. How dare he bring me the ash from the crematorium!"

But his minister whispered, "Sire, this is but a test arranged by the minister of Malwa to judge the calibre of their candidate. Therefore, send the youth back with the tray of ash." Then the king's brow

cleared and he said, "I don't accept this. Take it back to your country."

So Vinda ran off thankful to have escaped with his life.

Kanda went to the King of Avanthi and putting the ash into a silver chalice said to the king, "Sire, our Prime Minister has sent you this chalice full of sacred ash so that no harm can come to you. Pray accept this gift."

The king was moved by this sincere thought for his welfare. So he received the ash, and commended Kanda for his extreme courtesy and behaviour.

On the same day Kanda and Vinda returned to Malwa and related to the Prime Minister all that had happened to them. After listening to the accounts of the two, the Prime Minister chose Kanda for a cabinet post, as he had proved to be worthier of the two.





Robin Hood had defeated a band of Norman soldiers sent to capture him and had driven them all out of the forest. When the news of the defeat reached Nottingham Castle, Robert the Wolf was very angry indeed.

The Norman baron was Robin's most bitter enemy. He vowed he would capture Robin Hood and gathering together a large army, he marched from the castle. Just then a knight came riding towards him bearing the Royal Standard.



"My lord," cried the messenger. "I have urgent news for you from Prince John." "What can that be?" asked Robert the Wolf. "Richard Lion Heart, King of England, is aboard a ship and will soon land at Dover," the knight explained.

Robert the Wolf knew that he could not ride to Sherwood Forest to do battle with Robin Hood. "Tell the Prince," he said to the messenger, "that I shall return to Nottingham and await his orders."



The powerful Norman army which had been marching towards Sherwood Forest had to return to Nottingham Castle, much to the regret of Robert the Wolf. For a while, Robin and his merry men were safe in their hideout in the forest.

Meanwhile, inside Nottingham Castle, the Sheriff talked with Sir Stephen about their defeat. They were both afraid of losing their posts. Then news came about King Richard, and later Robert the Wolf made it clear that they would lose their lives if they did not defend the castle for Prince John.





Meanwhile, Robin had sent one or two of his friends to Nottingham to find out what was happening. Allan a Dale was one of them and he returned full of excitement and bursting to tell his news. "Robin!" he called. "Robin!"

"The news is all over town," he cried. "King Richard will soon be landing at Dover." "If it is true," replied Robin, "justice will come at last for all Saxons and I may be the Earl of Huntingdon again. I hope it is true."



That same evening, as the shadows of night began to fall over the land, a small vessel sailed into Dover harbour. There was hardly any fuss and very few people gave the little ship more than a glance as it moored.

When the ship was safely tied up, a tall, kingly figure stepped on to the quay. He was clad in armour and there was a crown on his head. It was Richard Lion Heart, King of England, home at last after fighting in the Crusades.



The sight of the stately figure of Richard Lion Heart pleased all the folk who had suffered at the hands of the Norman soldiers. As the king marched inland, the Saxon Knights welcomed him.

The crafty Prince John hastened to greet his brother as if he loved him, although he had been plotting to seize the throne. "Welcome home, sire," he said. "It is grand to see you again." Richard wondered if this was true!



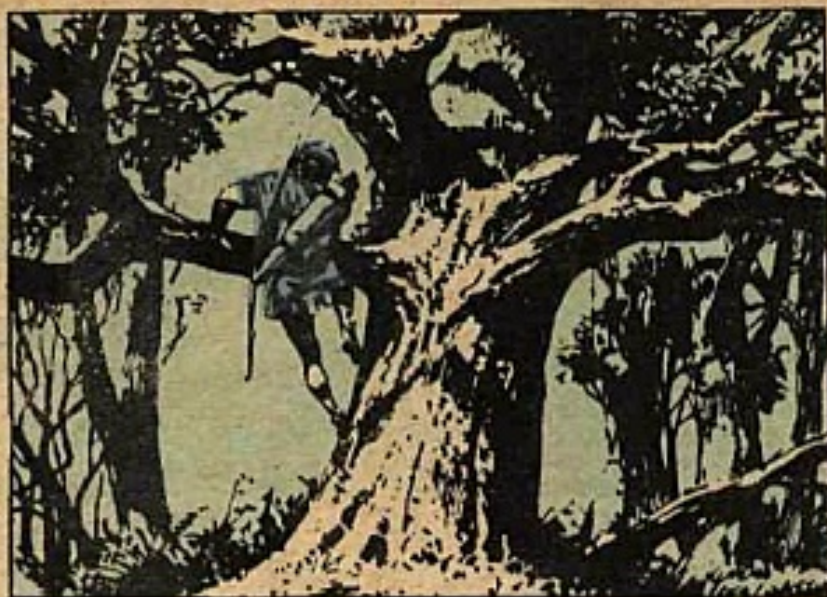


"I have heard rumours that there is trouble in England," Richard said calmly. Prince John indignantly denied such stories. But the king had been told that Prince John was in league with Robert the Wolf, and he was determined to find out the truth.

Later that same day, King Richard entered his own castle to the sound of many trumpets. In Sherwood Forest, the outlaws were still overjoyed at the news of the king's return, but Robin Hood warned them that there would always be treachery until the king defeated the renegades.



In spite of the peace and quiet, Robin still made sure his sentries were on the alert. Robin loved Sherwood Forest and liked to wander in its lovely glades. When he was tired he climbed up on to the bough of an oak tree and rested.



Suddenly, he sat up. A faint sound had reached his keen ears. He was very still, listening intently. Once again he heard that shuffling sound of someone walking through the grass. "Someone is coming," Robin thought to himself.

For quite sometime, Robin sat as still as a statue upon the bough of the oak tree. He waited and watched until a tall man appeared, shrouded from head to foot in a long cloak and with a hood that entirely covered his head and face.



ANOTHER EXCITING EPISODE IN NEXT ISSUE



Most Precious Gift

Uttamasena of Udayagiri was a charitable monarch. He did all in his power to make his people happy. His people also were faithful and dutiful towards him. As everyone was busy with some occupation or the other, there were few beggars in the land. The ones that begged were either lame or blind or totally crippled.

Soma was a young beggar who grew uneasy at the decline in begging. As he was well built and capable of hard work, people refused to give him alms.

Once after a fruitless day of begging, Soma sat under a tree dejected that he had received nothing for his pains. Overcome by desperation, he shouted out, "Oh! God, why do people

refuse to give me alms? I am faint with hunger and no one takes pity on me. I shall starve to death."

But no one paid any heed to him. Again he shouted, "Wise men say that he who plants the trees waters them also. If it indeed be God who does that why is he keeping mum at my plight? Where has he gone without doing his duty?"

This time Uttamasena who was riding past heard him. Reining his horse before the beggar, he said, "Young man, why do you criticise God so? Everyone adores the Creator, but you have no good words for him."

The beggar replied, "A God who refuses to feed me is best dead".



The king looked at him keenly and noticing that he was a robust young man said, "Alright I'll feed you, but on condition that you give me some part of your body. Will you give me an eye or a limb? I shall pay one thousand rupees for an arm, two thousand for a leg and half my kingdom for an eye. Now what do you say? What will you sell?"

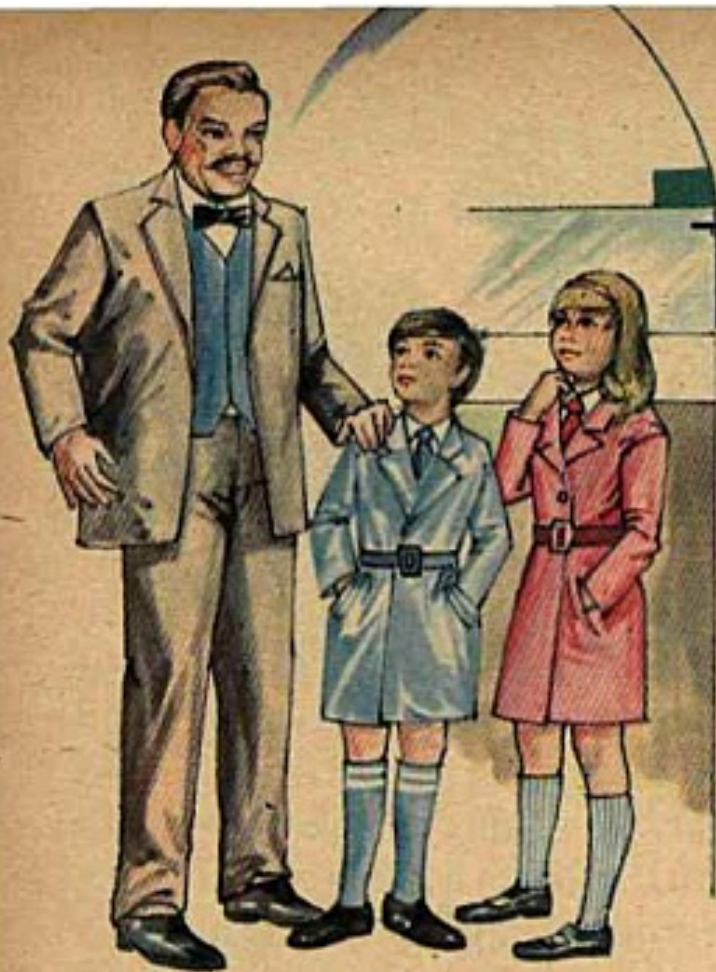
Soma hastily replied, "No Sir, I don't want your money because I am not going to part with my limbs or eyes."

Then the king said, "So you realize that your limbs and eyes are priceless. Now God has given you such valuable gifts and you scorn them by not putting them to use. Make use of your body for the right purpose of work and you need never starve. What do you say?"

Soma realized the truth of the king's statement. God's gift of the sound human body ought not to go waste. From that day on, he gave up begging and became the most industrious fellow in the kingdom.

HOW DOES A BEE FIND ITS WAY TO ITS HIVE?

We find our way around by taking note of certain features of the country, and bees do the same. Some experts believe that bees pick out the flowers they visited on the way out from the hive and reverse the route to go home. It is probably a matter of instinct.



THE DIAMOND

"I have spoken to Mr. Watts," he said. "It is all right for you to come with me. I will...how you say...show you the town?" His smile became even broader. I shuddered.

Rani said sensibly, "But Mr. Watts hasn't spoken to us. How can we come without..."

"But it is all fixed," the man from the Ministry interrupted her. "You will meet Mr. Watts here, half-an-hour before your plane is scheduled to take off. No problem." He opened his hands wide to add effect to his gesture. "See, no problem at all."

However much we didn't like the man, it seemed a far better idea to spend our time sight-seeing instead of waiting in the airport. And if Mr. Watts had said it was okay, I didn't see why we shouldn't go. I said so.

Rani looked at me down her nose. "You keep quite, pip-squeak," she said. Elder sisters are like that. "Alright, Sir, we shall come with you, if Mr.

"I don't think I quite like him," I said under my breath.

"Sssh," Rani said.

I piped down. After all, she was my elder sister.

The man from the Ministry approached us. At least, he said he was from the Ministry, but he didn't look it; dark, mustachioed, and with a jagged scar running along his right cheek, he looked more a ruffian than a Government official. He rubbed his palms together and smiled broadly, showing large yellow teeth. I didn't like his smile at all. It looked like the smile of a tiger who has just seen his morning's meal.

*Here is the story that was awarded the First Prize in
the recent Short Story Contest*

SMUGGLERS

by Shashi Tharoor

Watts has agreed."

"But of course," the man from the Ministry smiled even wider. "You can leave your baggage behind. My man will take care of it. Now come let us not waste time." He walked to the exit and we followed him.

But wait a minute—I guess I'm rushing the facts a bit. You must be wondering where Rani and I were, who the man from the Ministry was, and what all this was about. Well, sorry, I suppose I did take it for granted that you knew—Rani always says I'm in too much of a hurry to finish any tale I tell, like all pipsqueaks. Well, actually, what I've just been telling you about was happening at Bornavia airport, when we were leaving the country after the "Green horns affair." You see, Rani had won an essay competition and I'd got the consolation prize (Rani wrote my essay for me, but don't tell anyone that), which meant we both got free tickets to Bornavia at the time

of the coronation of the Padishah there. It so happened that while we were there we foiled the plot of the Green horns to assassinate the Padishah, but that's a story that's already been told before, so I'll spare you the details. Anyway, when this story begins we were at the airport, an hour before our plane was to take off, and when a further delay was announced, Mr. Watts, our school master who was in charge of us, went off to the enquiry counter to find out what was going on. (When he heard the announcement he'd had a serious bout of "What...what...what?" which was his speciality). It was at this time that the man from the Ministry, whom we'd never seen before, asked us to go with him, and when we told him that we had to have Mr. Watts's permission, he had gone off in search of him. It was then that I said, "I don't think I quite like him," and Rani, seeing him return,

said, "Sssh."

So you've got the picture. Well, let's now carry on where we'd left off.

There was nothing much to see in Bornavia city, the capital of Bornavia, so I won't bore you with a description of the sightseeing tour we went on. The best part of it was when the man from the Ministry (funny thing, he never told us his name) treated us to a triple-decker sundae each. Apart from that, there was hardly anything to describe.

Anyway we got back to the airport on time, just as the man from the Ministry had promised us, and the first thing we saw was Mr. Watts, red in the face, raising hell.

"But I tell you I left two children here...what...what...what...what...the dickens do you mean they were with me—I tell you I went to the enquiry counter—where are they, that's what...what...I'd like to know—their baggage is here, but where are they? What...what do you people do out here, if you can't..." and then he saw us. "What...what...what," he began his mouth dropping open.

"Mr. Watts!" I yelled. "We're here. We..."

"Come here, you little brats! Where did you wander off to without telling me, eh? What... what...what..."

"But we had your permission," I began. "We went with...with the man from the Ministry here..." I turned, around to point at him. He had vanished.

"Which man from what... what...what Ministry?" Mr. Watts asked.

"He's gone," Rani said, still dazed. "But he was here a minute ago. He said he'd asked your permission to..."

"Permission? What... what...what permission? No—one asked me for any permission. I went to the enquiry counter and I was a bit delayed coming back, because there was this fellow who kept on trying to sell booklets on Bornavia, though I told him we were leaving not coming."

Then an idea struck Rani (she is one of those genius types, as you must have guessed by now). "Do you think that the man delayed you because he wanted you out of the way while his accomplice took us out?" she asked, blinking like an excited owl.

"Perhaps," Mr. Watts agreed.

He had a healthy respect for Rani's grey cells. "But why? He didn't want to kidnap you or anything—he's brought you back. And while we're on that subject, you might as well tell me what...what...what went on just now. I'm still rather puzzled by it all."

"Well..." I began.

"Pipe down, pipsqueak," Rani said. "It was like this, Mr. Watts..." and she explained the whole thing.

"What...what...what...what?" said Mr. Watts, surprised.

And then the announcement came for us to take our luggage

through the customs. Still puzzled about the whole affair, we hefted our bags and went to the customs lounge.

When I reached the head of the queue the customs official grinned at me and said, "Anything to declare, young man?"

"Only two wads of chewing-gum," I replied, taking them out of my pocket.

"You can have that duty-free," he grinned. Then he made a great show of opening my suitcase, looking carefully at my shirts and trousers. "Sure there's no gold hidden in the lining?" he joked.



I rather liked him, so I played along. "You'll have to rip them to find out," I said.

He wrinkled his forehead. "It's easier not to," he said, "Alright your other bag now."

I slung off the large air-bag I usually carried onto the plane with me. It was only half-full with a couple of books and a few souvenirs I'd picked up. The customs official unzipped it and peered solemnly into it. I suppose he didn't really need to—no other customs chap would have suspected a twelve-year-old boy of smuggling, but this guy seemed to be in a humorous mood. And then he took out a large doll from my bag and said, "Good God, do you play with this?"

I tell you, it gave me the shock of my life. I didn't have a doll—the last thing I'd have in my bag would be a sissy doll—and I knew Rani didn't like dolls either, she was too old for them and she only read books anyway. She too stared at the doll in surprise and then a knowing look came on to her face.

"Of course not," I hotly denied. "It isn't mine—I don't know whose it..."

Rani interrupted. "It's mine," she said softly, but there was a

funny tone to her voice. "I put it into your bag because there wasn't enough space in mine." Now that was an outright lie and I knew it, but I couldn't understand why Rani wanted to claim that doll. She considered dolls childish and silly and she hadn't touched them in ages. But if she wanted to pretend it was hers, I guessed she must be have a jolly good reason, so I played along with her. The customs official gave her a funny look, after all you don't find fourteen-year-old girls playing with dolls very often and even Mr. Watts looked surprised, knowing the type of girl Rani was, but before he could say "What...what...what...what" she pushed her bag up for inspection, and that was that.

It was only as we walked to the plane that Rani told us of her reason.

"I think I know what's going on," she said excitedly. "While one fellow delayed Mr. Watts and another took us out, a third chap must have put the doll into your bag, feeling sure the customs chaps wouldn't bother to check children's bags and that we'd never find out. When we land in Bombay their accom-



plices will probably be waiting for us and they'll steal either the doll or the whole bag."

"But why?" I interrupted. "What's so great about a miserable two-foot doll?"

"It must be containing diamonds or something else they want to smuggle, silly." Rani answered. "But of course, a pipsqueak like you..."

"Okay, okay," I interrupted hastily. "So what do we do to f...f...er...oil...I mean—upset their plan?"

"Foil, pipsqueak," she corrected me. Rani can be really irritating at times. "Just you wait and see."

In the plane—we had three seats together, on the left side of the aisle—Rani carefully

took out the doll and shook it near her ear. "I can hear something," she whispered excitedly. "It's..."

"Sshh," I said, as a man passed us.

He couldn't have seen Rani or the doll, since Mr. Watts obscured his view, but I could see him. He had shaved off his moustache, but there was no mistaking the scar on his right cheek. It was the man from the Ministry.

He walked to his seat, three rows in front of us, and sat down next to another fellow whom he tapped on the shoulder. The other fellow turned and—

"That...that's the man who delayed me in the airport!" said

Mr. Watts in a fierce whisper.

"And the other man's the chap who took us out!" I said.

"And the third man—the man who's just now leaning over from the opposite seat to talk to him—must be the chap who placed the doll in your bag!" Rani added.

This was getting exciting!

"What do we do now?" I asked.

"Take the diamonds out—and replace them inside the doll with something else," Rani said.

"How about a note saying SORRY—BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME," I suggested impishly. One thing you must agree, I've got a sense of humour!

"Not a bad idea, pipsqueak," Rani agreed. "Now what we've got to do is open up this doll somehow. Right, Mr. Watts?"

Mr. Watts nodded. "That's all very well, but how?" he said.

"Let's see if we can unscrew the head," I suggested. I was getting pretty interested in the whole affair by now.

Rani tried twisting the doll's head till her hand ached, but it refused to budge.

"Let me try," I said impatiently. "It takes a man to do such

manly work."

Rani looked as though she was about to call me 'piqsqueak' again, but then she changed her mind and handed it over.

I pressed the doll's head hard and turned it the opposite way from what Rani had been trying. There was a sharp click and the head came off—and three gold locketts fell into my lap!

"Gold!" I said excitedly.

"Wait" Mr. Watts said. "There's a piece of paper sticking out of the neck!"

I picked up the paper. It was folded twice. Over the first fold was written: DO NOT UNFOLD THIS NOTE TILL YOU HAVE EXAMINED THE LOCKETS CAREFULLY.

"Must be a note for the smugglers' agents in Bombay!" I said.

"Let's examine the locketts anyway," Rani suggested.

I picked them up and nearly fell off my seat. For the three gold locketts contain a photo each of Rani, Mr. Watts and myself.

"What what what what?" gasped Mr. Watts.

"See the note, pipsqueak," Rani ordered.

I opened the note completely

with trembling hands. It read;
A GIFT FROM THE PADI-
SHAH
TO THREE FRIENDS OF
BORNAVIA
WITH HEARTFELT APPRE-
CIATION
FOR SERVICES RENDERED

"It's for saving the Padishah's life!" Rani exclaimed.

"There's a P.S." I said. It was written in a different handwriting.

P.S. SURPRISED, AREN'T YOU? WE THOUGHT WE'D GIVE YOU ANOTHER ADVENTURE. SORRY FOR THE DECEPTION!

P.P.S. ANYWAY YOU'RE PRETTY SMART TO HAVE

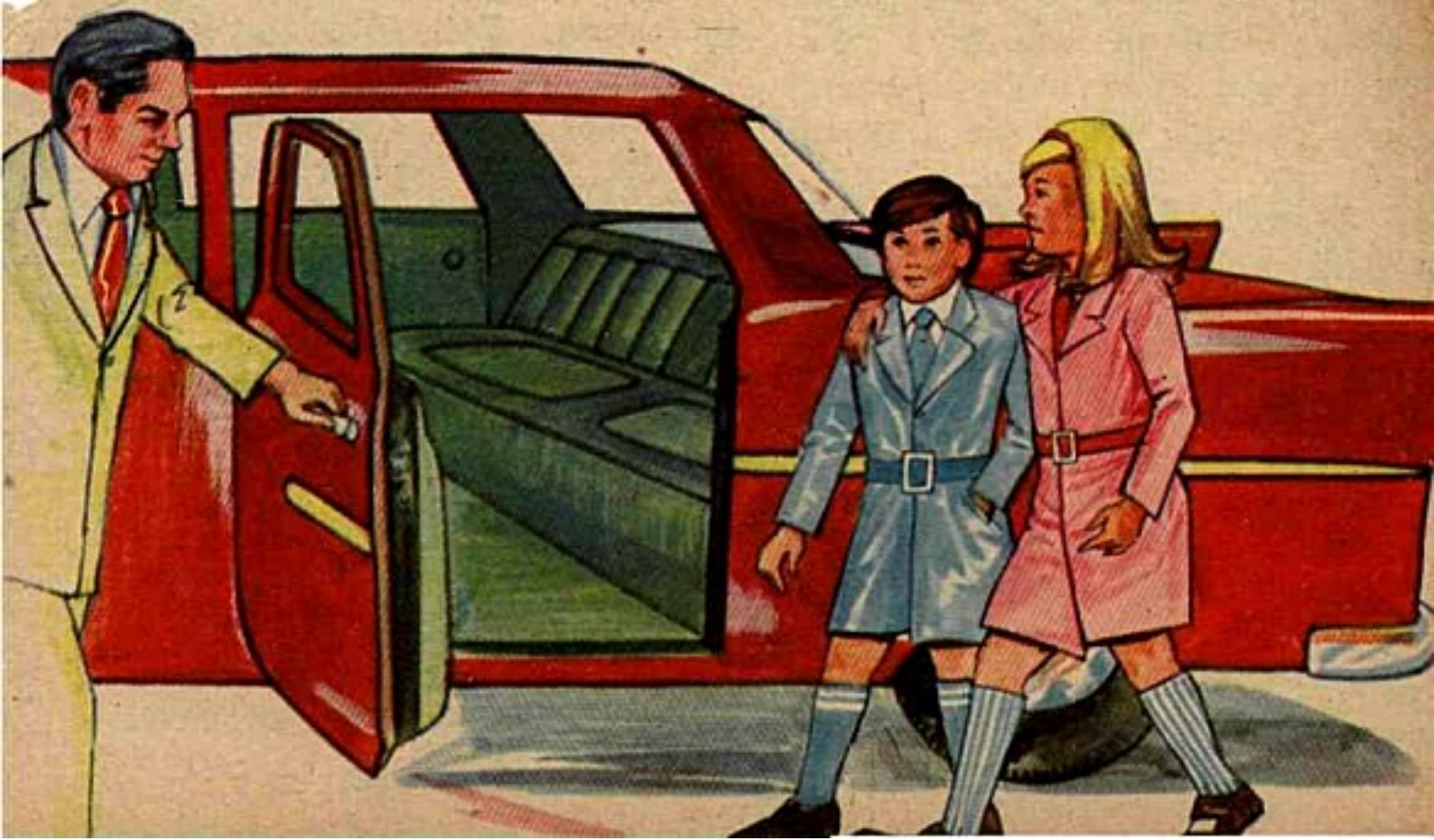
GOT THIS FAR? SO CONGRATULATIONS!

"What ... what ... what... what?" repeated Mr. Watts.

"We'd better ask the man from the Ministry what this is all about," Rani said, practical as ever.

We didn't have to. He was already walking to our seat, grinning wider than ever.

"Nice little trick, eh! I had a bet you would find out. Of course, if you didn't, we would have told you when you landed in Bombay. It's the Padishah's idea, you see. As for us three"—he waved his hand—"We came along not only to add to your suspicions;



we've got some Government work in Bombay."

We had a good laugh all around. After talking for a little while longer, the man from the Ministry went back to his seat. I noticed him scribbling something on a piece of Airlines paper but I thought nothing of it.

At Bombay the Customs men didn't even bother to look at the doll. They waved us through pretty fast.

We were waiting for a taxi when the man from the Ministry approached us. "Transport?" he smiled broadly. "Allow us." His two friends came along and took our bags, and led us to a waiting car—a big important foreign-looking vehicle. We got in and drove to school where our parents would be waiting for us.

When we reached St. William's the men took our baggage off the car, smiled, and drove off.

Mummy and Daddy were waiting for us. We raced to them and after all the usual hugging and kissing, we bade farewell to Mr. Watts and the principal, got permission not to come to school the next day, and went off home. In the car

we breathlessly related our exploits.

"See, Mummy, here's the doll," Rani said, and reached into my bag. It wasn't there!

"Did you put it anywhere else?" she asked me.

"No," I said firmly.

"Did we leave it behind in the plane?"

"Of course not—it was in the bag when we passed through Customs and—"

"There's a note here!" Rani interrupted me. "Look—it's written by the man from the Ministry!"

I read it full of excitement.

"Sorry," it said. "Our trick did work. You see, the legs of the doll were stuffed with diamonds. We took the bag. Thanks for seeing us through Customs." It was signed simply, "You know who."

Rani and I looked at each other for a full minute. Then we burst out laughing.

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE SIGN FOR 'AND'?

We often see the sign & in place of the word "and"; it is known as an *ampersand*. This word is of mixed Latin and English origin, and it really means "and, *per se* (by itself)—and." The sign itself, however, came from a symbol that represented the Latin word *et* (and).

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

Here is your opportunity to win a cash prize!
Winning captions will be announced in the July issue



- ★ These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- ★ Prize of Rs. 20 will be awarded for the best double caption. Remember, entries must be received by the 31st May.
- ★ Your entry should be written on a postcard, giving your full name and address, together with age and sent to:

Photo Caption Contest,
Chandamama Magazine,
Madras-26.

Result of Photo Caption Contest in March Issue

The prize is awarded to
Miss L. Hima Kumari
C/o. Sri L. Brahmananda Rao
Asst. Engineer (P. W. D.)
Udipi Building, Mamillagudem
KHAMMAM.

Winning Entry — 'Daring Skill' — 'Standing Still'

THE PRINCESS WHOSE

by Vasanti Dedhia

This is the story that gained the Second Prize in the Short Story Contest

Once upon a time there lived a king and a queen who had but one child, a little girl, who was very beautiful and whose hair curled in wonderful ringlets to her knees, and was as golden as the Sun. Everybody said that her hair was the most beautiful in the world—and it was quite true.

Now the little princess was petted and fondled, and was given everything that she wished for, and in time she grew very selfish and sulky, as all children do if they always get their own way. Strange to say, the Princess's beautiful hair gradually grew darker, and straighter, and her curls disappeared, so that when she was sixteen years of age, her hair hung down to her knees, as straight and dark as if it had been waxed, and she was no more the most beautiful Princess in the world!

Now the Princess grieved over this, and so did her parents,

and did everything in their power to make her hair curl. The finest barbers in the world were summoned to attend her—ointments and lotions from the East were brought to rub into her scalp and her hair was washed in dew collected from rose petals, but it was all to no avail, her hair hung down her



HAIR WOULD NOT CURL

back as straight and as dark and greasy as ever.

One day, when the Princess was out driving in her coach, she passed a little cottage and she heard a woman say, "You naughty child, your hair will never curl if you don't eat crusts. Eat them up at once!"

When the Princess arrived at the palace, she ran to the king and queen in great excitement and said, "Now I know what

will make my hair curl again, I must eat crusts!" Then she told her parents what she heard the woman say, but they were horrified.

"What! a Princess eat crusts! That you never shall, they are only for beggars—why! We have not such a thing as a crust in the palace, and we know your tender throat could never swallow such hard fare!"

So the months went on, and



still the Princess's hair remained quite straight.

One day, the Princess was sitting in the gardens, all alone, and feeling very bored, when a little grey man suddenly stood in front of her. She felt rather frightened, and was just going to call the guard at the gates, when the old man said in a sing-song voice:-

“If you beautiful would be,
Take this golden key,
Follow closely after me,
And a door you will see,
Open it quite gently,
Follow the path across the
lea.”

Then he handed her a little golden key. The Princess took it and followed the old man to a green door, which she had never seen before, in the garden wall. Gently she opened the door and there saw a path ahead, and followed the path as the old man had told her. When she looked around the old man vanished.

By and by, she came to a green bay-tree, and looked under it, expecting to find something which would make her beautiful. Instead she found a naked child lying under it, and the child moaned and shivered. The Princess had never seen

poverty like this, and she suddenly felt a pain at her heart, but she did not know that it was pity knocking there. She knelt down, and took off her cloak, and wrapped it around the child, who smiled and appeared warmer instantly. Then the Princess walked on in search of beauty.

After a long time, she met a girl whose dress was in rags, and whose shoulders showed blue with cold under it. At this the Princess felt a mist in her eyes—she had never wept in her life. “Here is my dress,” she said, as she took it off, and gave it to the girl, “Take it, I have plenty.” The girl kissed her hand gratefully, and the Princess walked on in her petticoat, feeling rather cold.

The next person she met was a poor woman, who had no shoes, and whose bare feet were cut and bleeding. The Princess's tears fell down her cheeks on to her hair—which seemed brighter and richer—but she did not notice it, she was too busy taking off her own shoes to give to the poor woman. The woman blessed her, and the Princess went on, feeling tired and more hungry

than she had ever felt in her life.

The rain came down, and the wind blew her about, and the Princess was in a sorry plight, when she suddenly saw the little man again. He was eating a crust of bread, and the sight of it made the Princess feel more hungry than ever. "Oh, give me just a little bite," she begged.

"Here is the crust," said the old man, "you will find your throat is not so tender after all the rain and the wind it has endured." So he gave the Princess crust after crust, and the Princess ate and ate, and she drank cold water from the spring.

"Now let me go home," she said. "I came to search for beauty, but it does not matter now, for I have seen such misery in the world that I would have not believed possible."

"Now," said the old man, "go to your mirror,"—then he vanished, and the Princess found herself in her own garden.

When she went to her room there stood her father and mother in great dismay at her absence. When they saw how cold and wet she was, without shoes, cloak or dress, they were

distressed, but suddenly they cried, "Look, look at your hair!" There it fell down to her knees in lovely golden curls and ringlets, and it truly was the most beautiful in the world.

After that the Princess ate crusts once a week to remind herself of what the poor of her kingdom had to endure, and she went out many times with clothes and food for her people, and blessings poured on her head, so that it always shone like pure gold.



And now, here is the Third Prize winning story

In a large garden, there once lived a number of butterflies. You have seen butterflies and know what lovely looking things they are. But in this garden there was one little butterfly which was more beautiful than all the other. Butterflies from other gardens came just to take a look at it. It was the talk of the garden. The sun kissed its wings and the flowers it sat on blushed with pleasure. The little butterfly was very happy. It was praised and petted wherever it went. It lived its life



THE VAIN BUTTERFLY

by P. Balasundaram

from day to day, flitting from flower to flower and basking in the sun.

One sunny, lazy, afternoon, when the whole garden was drowsing the butterfly sat under the shade of a large Sun-flower. 'How wonderful' it thought to be the prettiest butterfly—to be petted and praised and made much of by the others. I am the luckiest butterfly alive.

Just then it saw a swallow tail flit by. It was blue, and white and black and had the largest pair of wings that the little butterfly had ever seen. 'Hey' thought the butterfly wait a minute. May be I am not the luckiest butterfly alive. May be it is that huge swallow tail which just flew past. Look at the size of its wings and look at mine. How wonderful to

have a pair of wings like that.

Thereafter the little butterfly became quite sad. It look to flying away by itself and brooding. It no longer played catch with the other butterflies but sat quietly by itself. The other butterflies wondered what had caused this change. They were sorry for the little butterfly but nothing they could do would help it.

One day the little butterfly sat all alone, feeling lonely and miserable, when suddenly it thought of a plan. It would fly to fairy land and implore the Queen of the fairies to change its wings. So, one day, telling no one of its plan, it flitted away, out of the garden and across hills and meadows and brooks until it reached the land of the fairies. When the fairy Queen heard why the little butterfly had come to see her, she smiled. But her smile was rather sad. "I am sure you will regret it, if I give you what you want," she said "Won't you change your mind little butterfly? You are so beautiful already." But the little Butterfly would not change it's mind. It wanted the largest and most brilliant wings. The fairy Queen sighed. Then she waved

her magic wand once over the butterfly, and it went dizzy—but suddenly, there she was with the largest, the most beautiful and most brilliant wings anyone ever saw.

How thrilled she was. How beautiful she looked as she flew home, her brilliant coloured wings flashing in the sun. But she wasn't even half-way home when she began to feel extremely tired. Her wings were so large now that they were too heavy for her and she could not fly for long. When the little butterfly realised this, she nearly went back to the fairy Queen to get her old wings back, but she did not.

After a long time butterfly reached its old garden. It was weary and sat quietly on a cluster of flowers. Soon the other butterflies found her and gathered around excitedly. "Where have you been," they asked her. "What enormous wings you have," and "How beautiful you are." So the little butterfly told them what she had done and how the fairy Queen had granted her wish. "How clever of you," cried the young ones in admiration. "But why?" asked the older ones, puzzled. "You were so

beautiful already." "You will regret it," said the old and wise ones. But the little butterfly only laughed and rose into the air on its new wings. "Beautiful," cried the watching butterflies. "Wonderful." "Marvellous." "Now," thought the little butterfly, "I am really the most beautiful butterfly alive."

So life went on for these butterflies, with the little butterfly the undisputed Queen of the garden. True, it could not join in many games now, nor fly far away. But what did it matter. It was far too happy to care.

One day the little butterfly was dozing in the sun. Suddenly there was a sharp shower of rain. The other little butterflies crept under bushes

but the beautiful little butterfly was completely drenched before it could even flap its large wings once. It lay there, unable to escape, sodden and sad and wished it had its small swift wings again.

When the sun came out again, a little boy came running out into the garden to play. He saw the butterfly lying on the grass. "What a huge butterfly," he cried in delight, and picking it up, ran into the house.

What happened to the butterfly afterwards no one ever knew for sure. But sometimes, when the other little butterflies fly past the window of the little boy's room they imagine they see someone very like our butterfly framed and hung on the wall.

WHAT IS A MONGOOSE?

Do you know who Rikki-tikki-tavi was? If you do not, he was the mongoose in one of Rudyard Kipling's stories of India. The mongoose makes an attractive pet and, as it is related to the cat, perhaps this is why! The Indian mongoose is about 18 inches long, has short legs and is greyish in colour. It has a long tail. It is a famous killer of snakes—even the deadly cobra rarely, if ever, gets the better of the brave little mongoose. It hunts other animals also.



ROYAL HEADACHE

Long ago people who lived in the Dandakaranya forest knew little about culture and refinement. But when each tribe acquired a king, things began to change. They gave up their barbaric ways and gradually began to adopt civilized manners and behaviour.

But the people in the area of Vanapada did not change. They led primitive lives. The law of the jungle prevailed there. Man fought against man and beast. All this was because they did not have a leader who could guide them along proper lines.

Suguna lived in that area. He worried that his people did not change their beastly ways. He went round exhorting them

to give up violence and lead peaceful lives. But he was laughed at and driven away. Disgusted with his fellows, he lived apart in a lonely part of the forest.

Close by was a hermitage. A hermit lived there. Suguna went to him and said, "Holy Sir, my people lead brutish lives. They are forever quarrelling amongst themselves. Can't something be done to change their ways?"

The hermit replied, "Yes, something can be done. Select a man brave and courageous to rule over your people. Get another man wise and clever to be his minister. If you do that, soon your people will mend their ways."



Suguna came back to his people, called one of them aside and said, "Simhanath, you will be the king of this area. Gather an army and fill your coffers. Only then can we live in peace."

Simhanath became king and was accepted as such by the others. The hermit was invited to conduct the coronation of the new king. After the ceremonies were over and the new king had been installed, the sage told Simhanath, "Well, so far so good. Now get a good man to counsel you, and act on the advice of your minister."

But Simhanath had different ideas. He thought that a king

should be independent. If a king listened to the advice of a minister he would become a slave.

So no minister was appointed to the court. Soon the new king began to impose laws and rules on the people as his fancies dictated. Those who obeyed him found favour in the royal eyes. But those who did not obey were treated most harshly. Again there was unrest and turmoil in that forest kingdom.

Once more, Suguna appealed to the wise old sage for help. The hermit said, "In a week's time, I shall come to see your king. In the meanwhile, give him this flower. Let no one but the king smell its fragrance."

Then he enclosed a flower in a leaf and sent it to the king. Simhanath was overjoyed to see a lovely flower like that and inhaled its fragrance deeply. He declared that he had not smelled such fragrance before in his life. So all day long he kept the flower in his hand and inhaled from it.

Next day he came down with a violent headache which no one could cure. Day by day the pain increased until it became unbearable.

A week later, the sage of the forest came to see him. Simhanath implored the hermit to cure him. Then the latter said, "No wonder you have the headache! It's not easy to rule over a people. I am surprised that you got the headache so late. Thank God, your skull is thick enough to withstand the pain of it all. Appoint a minister and pass on your headache to him."

Simhanath bristled in anger. "Why should I listen to the words of some stranger? How can I rule like that?" he shouted.

The sage smiled and said, "You don't have to listen to him. This is what you can do. Give your intelligence to your minister. Then he'll be doing what you want. Select a person and impart a portion of your knowledge to him. Then your headache will vanish. You need never worry about your rule."

Impressed by these words, Simhanath declared that he would appoint Suguna as his minister. Then the sage said he would assist in transferring a portion of his intelligence to the new minister. He sprinkled some powder over Simhanath



and soon the king fell into a deep slumber.

Then the sage turned to Suguna and said, "When he wakes up, his headache will be gone. Be his minister and govern well."

A little later Simhanath woke up and declared that his headache was gone. So the hermit said, "There you are! Now don't worry about your rule. Give that responsibility to Suguna."

Simhanath did as he was told and from that day on things changed for the better. Under Suguna's wise government, law and order came to that forest kingdom, and people lived in harmony with each other.



Age And Wisdom

The Aravalli mountains were ruled by a king called Andaka. One day he had a brilliant idea. Why should superannuated people continue to live? Would it not be better if they were banished from the land? Then the others could live happily and no one would be burdened by old age and silver hairs.

Acting upon this thought, Andaka banished all old people from his land. The poor old folks went to the next valley and began to live there. Thus there were no old men in that land. As soon as a man completed sixty years of age, he had to leave that land.

Kanta was a young man whose father had reached the mandatory age of sixty. According

to the king's law, he had to quit the city and go into the forest. But Kanta loved his father dearly and could not bear to be parted from him. So when the day came for him to escort his father out of the city he pretended to leave, but when night fell secretly brought his parent back to the house.

Now no one was aware of what the youth had done. People began to grumble about the new law. Slowly an opposition to the king's policy grew. The king's minister, a sagacious man, sensing this went to the king and said, "Sire, your new law has reduced the number of intelligent people in this land. What shall we do?"

"Nonsense," replied the irate

king. "If what you say is true then there can be no intelligence in the land. I cannot accept this. I will prove to you that you are wrong."

Then the king proclaimed that everyone should exhibit a rope that had been made from ashes.

The good folks of the land were taken aback by this quixotic order. Prepare a rope from ashes? How can that be possible?

Like all the others, Kanta heard the king's demand and was perplexed. So he consulted his father who was a wise old man.

His father said, "Pooh, is that all? Place a rope on a tray

and burn it. Don't disturb the ashes. Then show it to the king."

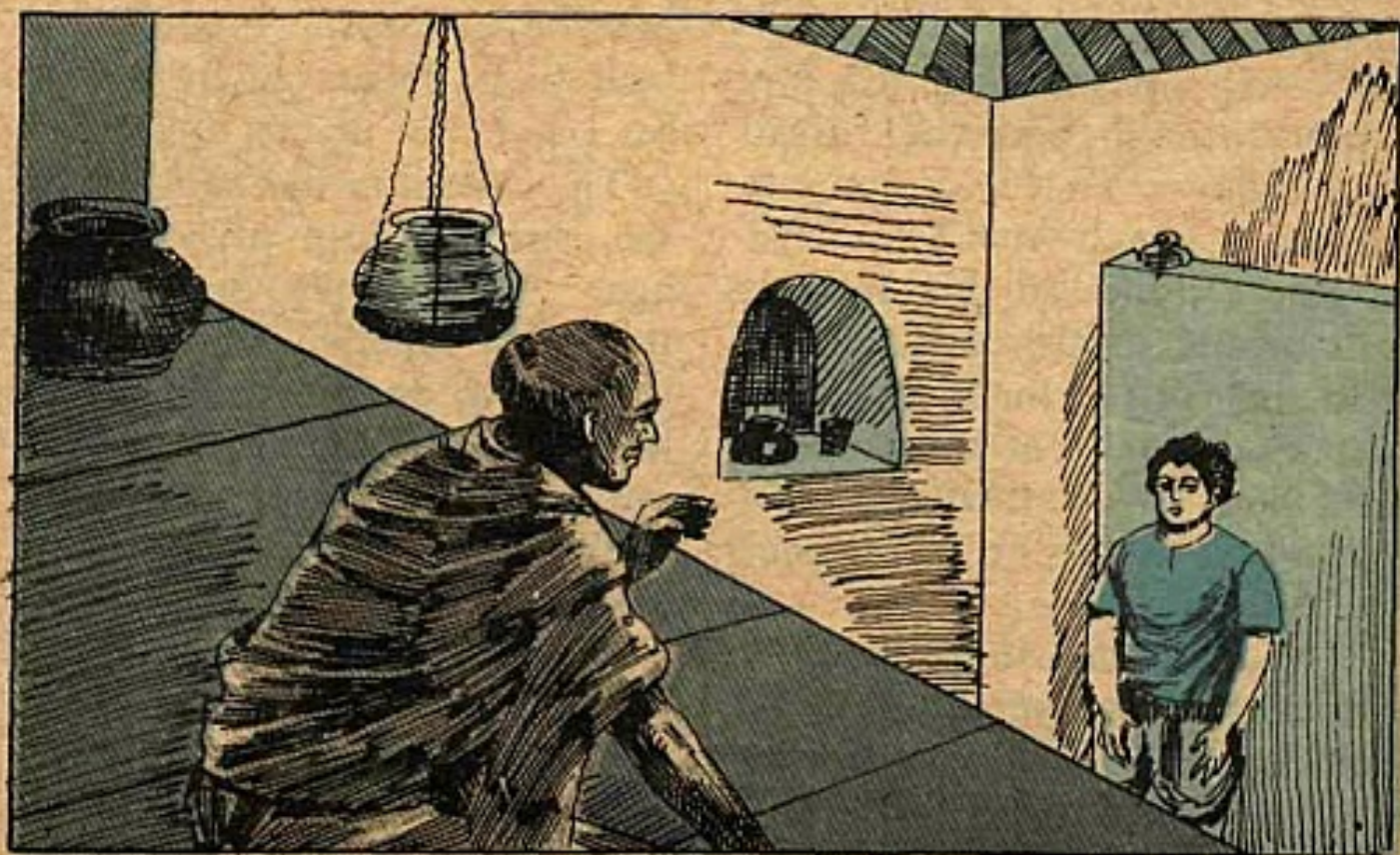
Kanta did as he was told and took the ashy rope to the king who praised him warmly for his intelligence. Then turning to minister he said, "There, what did I tell you? Look at this intelligent young man."

But the minister was not convinced.

"Sire," he said. "It does seem possible that the young man thought of this idea. So let us have another test."

The king agreed and another royal proclamation went forth.

The people of the land must thread the ends of a conch shell and show it to the king.



king. "If what you say is true then there can be no intelligence in the land. I cannot accept this. I will prove to you that you are wrong."

Then the king proclaimed that everyone should exhibit a rope that had been made from ashes.

The good folks of the land were taken aback by this quixotic order. Prepare a rope from ashes? How can that be possible?

Like all the others, Kanta heard the king's demand and was perplexed. So he consulted his father who was a wise old man.

His father said, "Pooh, is that all? Place a rope on a tray

and burn it. Don't disturb the ashes. Then show it to the king."

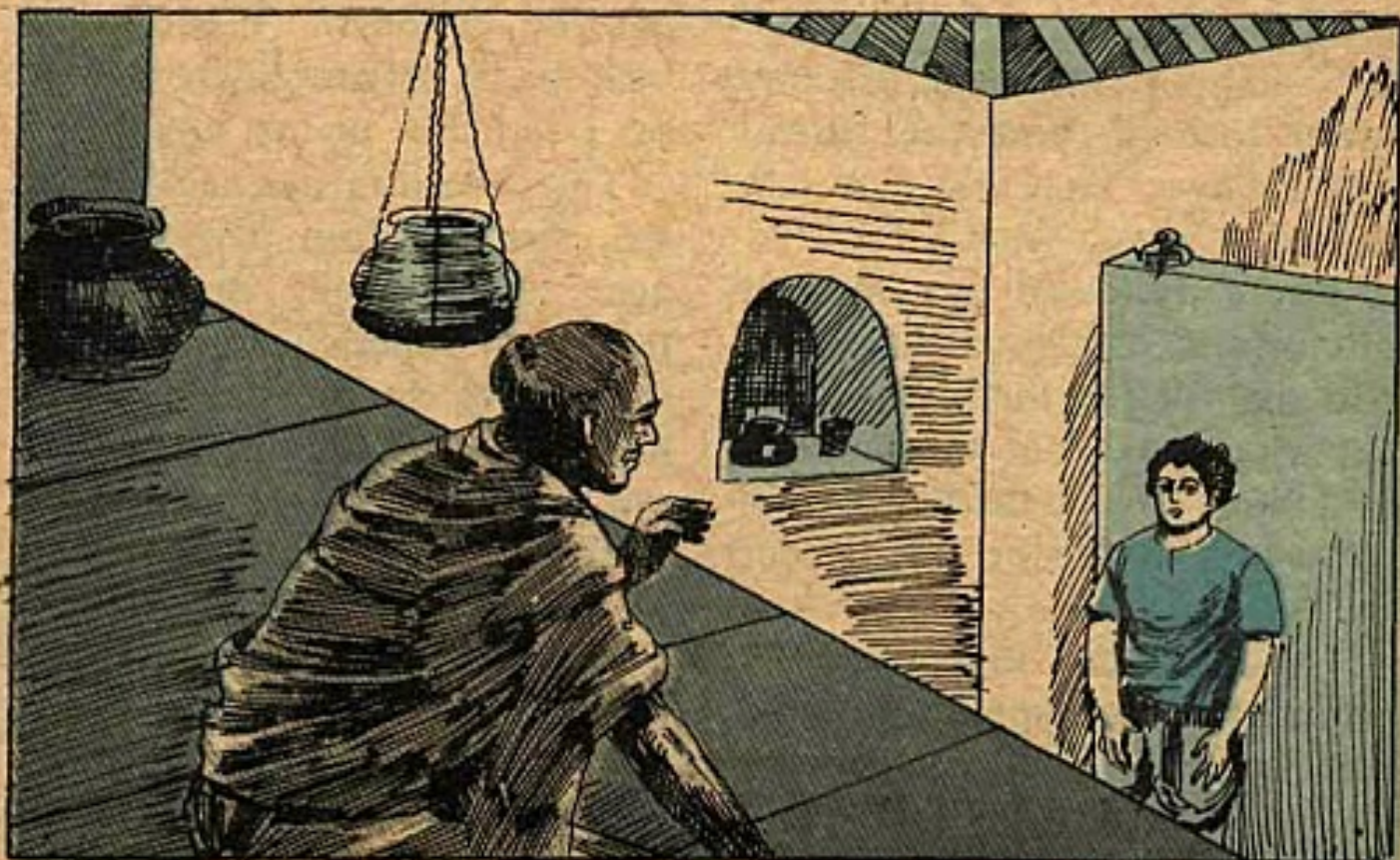
Kanta did as he was told and took the ashy rope to the king who praised him warmly for his intelligence. Then turning to minister he said, "There, what did I tell you? Look at this intelligent young man."

But the minister was not convinced.

"Sire," he said. "It does seem possible that the young man thought of this idea. So let us have another test."

The king agreed and another royal proclamation went forth.

The people of the land must thread the ends of a conch shell and show it to the king.



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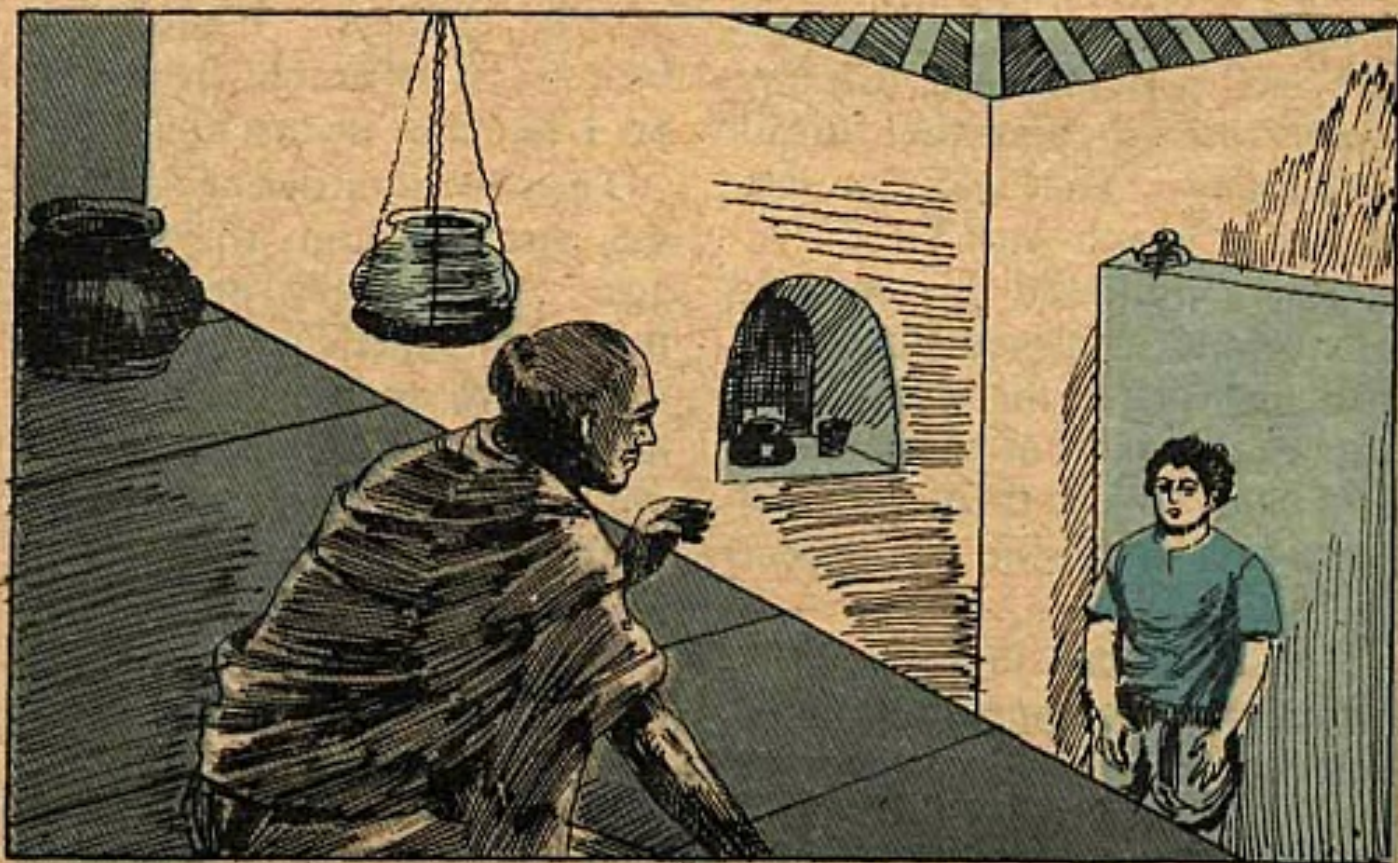
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Again the good people wrung their hands in despair, and Kanta went to his father who said, 'The hole at the end of a conch shell is very small. Even the thinnest thread cannot pass through it. So, tie a grain of rice at the end of a thread. Cause an ant to drag the rice through the ear of the shell. It will drag the tiny grain through and the thread will follow. That way you can thread a conch shell.'

Kanta followed his father's advice and displayed the threaded shell before the king. Then the king looked at the minister and said, "Well, there you are! Who says there's no intelligence in the land!"

The sceptical minister said, "Sire, there is something wrong somewhere. This young man has performed two difficult tasks successfully while all the others

have failed. I don't believe that he did this all by himself. Some one must have helped him."

Then the minister threatened Kanta with torture if he did not reveal the truth. So Kanta blurted out the truth. He said, "Oh! King, my father taught me the answers. I could not bear to be separated from him. So I hid him in my house."

Then the minister said, "You see, sire, wisdom arrives with age. Old people draw upon their rich experience and advise the young on the problems of life. We need such men to light our path in the darkness. No country can progress without wise old heads."

King Andaka realised the folly of his order. So the quixotic law was repealed and all the young people were reunited with their families.



MAHABHARATA

The story so far.....

Yudhishthira, after being proclaimed emperor at Indraprastha, the new capital of the Pandava Kingdom, allowed himself to be enveigled into a game of dice, planned by Duryodhana and his uncle, the wily Sakuni.

In this crooked game, Yudhishthira lost everything, his kingdom and all his possessions, and was forced with his brothers and Draupadi, to retire to the forests as homeless exiles for a period of thirteen years.

Eventually the years of banishment came to an end, and Yudhishthira demanded that his kingdom should be restored to

him. The old king, Dhritarashtra and the virtuous councillors advised the restoration, but the jealous Duryodhana hated his cousins and preparations were made on both sides for a war that could only have disastrous results.

After his conference with the Pandavas, Sanjaya returned to Hastinapura. He sought out Dhritarashtra and said, "Yudhishthira has promised that he will not go against what is lawful and just. But he has sufficient grounds to condemn the unjust attitude of the Kauravas. To-morrow, in the



Sanjaya tells of his visit to the Pandavas

royal court, I will convey his message to all of you."

After Sanjaya's departure to his quarters, Dhritarashtra invited Vidura the Wise, to the palace, and when the latter came, acquainted him of Sanjaya's ominous words. Then Vidura said, "Oh! King, give at least a few villages to the Pandavas. Surely, they will be satisfied with that. We can prevent the war."

Next day, the royal court buzzed with rumours of Sanjaya's dire warnings. Duryodhana arrived with his Generals

and Allies to hear Sanjaya's words.

Sanjaya looked round the assembly of Peers and spoke thus, "On Dhritarashtra's instructions, I went to the Pandavas, and talked to them. I have now come back with their reply. Arjuna, that great archer warned that Duryodhana and his kinsmen would be punished severely for their wrong doing. He said that Yudhishtira was a patient man, but Bhima would certainly destroy the entire Kaurava army with his formidable mace. Moreover they had the support of redoubtable warriors like King Virata, the King of Panchala, the Upapandavas, Abhimanyu, Nakula and Sahadeva. In the event of a war, they would aid the Pandavas so completely, that not a bit of territory would remain to Duryodhana. Dhritarashtra's race would mingle with the dust. All this Arjuna said." Sanjaya ceased speaking to let his words sink into the minds of the Kauravas. Then Bhishma said, "Duryodhana, you have lost your wits in the clever speeches of Karna, Sakuni and Duhshasana. Stop this war, and your race will

live.”

As soon as he heard this Karna, the hothead, bounded from his seat and replied, “Lord Bhishma, if anyone else other than you had uttered these words, the consequences would have been fatal. Neither have I strayed from the path of Kshattriya virtues, nor have I advised Duryodhana wrongly. If war breaks out, I shall destroy the Pandavas single-handed. Why should we extend the olive branch to those who have always treated us as their foes?”

At these words a pitying smile flickered across the old Warrior's face. Then Bhishma turned to Dhritarashtra and said, “Do not place your trust in this vain boaster. He boasts that he will destroy the Pandavas all by himself. But he has yet to prove his valour and has accomplished not even a fraction of their heroic deeds. He speaks out of rancour and jealousy. Therefore, it is not surprising to hear such words from him. Where was his valour when Arjuna routed the Kauravas so successfully in that ill-fated expedition to the land of Virata? When the Gandharvas overpowered Duryo-



Bhishma entreats Duryodhana to avoid war

dhana and made him a prisoner, Where was Karna? Sleeping? The Pandavas came to the rescue and freed Duryodhana from the Gandharvas. Karna is nothing but a loud-mouthed prater. We should not pay any heed to his words.”

Even Drona spoke in favour of Bhishma. “What Bhishma has said is true. We cannot quarrel with Arjuna for his hostile words. Let us make peace with the Pandavas. That will be best for all.”

Dhritarashtra was perplexed in the extreme by these persuasive words of wisdom and com-



Drona extols Dhritarashtra to make peace

nonsense. But he kept his counsel. Then after a while he requested Sanjaya to convey to the court Yudhishtira's message. Accordingly Sanjaya informed the assemblage that Yudhishtira did not want war, but if it was inevitable, he was well prepared for that also.

Dhritarashtra was alarmed to hear this. Though he feared neither Yudhishtira nor Arjuna, the thought of Bhima sent uncontrollable shivers down his spine. Everyone was aware of the great strength of the Pandava colossus. Even Drona and Bhishma feared him. But

they would fight on the side of the Kauravas though they were not inimical towards the Pandavas. But despite all this, deep in his heart he knew that his race would be completely destroyed in the event of a war. So he composed himself and said, "True. Arjuna and Bhima may well destroy us. Therefore let us think about peace. Bhishma and Drona mean well. Let us follow their advice."

His eyes red with rage, Duryodhana got up and addressed the King. "Father," he thundered, "Why should you think of defeat? If the Pandavas are all that powerful, why should they beg for a few villages? And as for Bhima, well, he is no match for me. I can finish him off with my mace. Lord Bhishma alone can defeat the entire Pandava army. Surely, Drona and Aswathama can kill Arjuna easily? As long as Karna retains the powerful weapon given to him by the divine Indra no one can defeat him. We have many great warriors to fight with us, so why should there be talk of defeat?"

Then turning to Sanjaya, he asked, "How well are the Pandavas prepared? What are

their plans?"

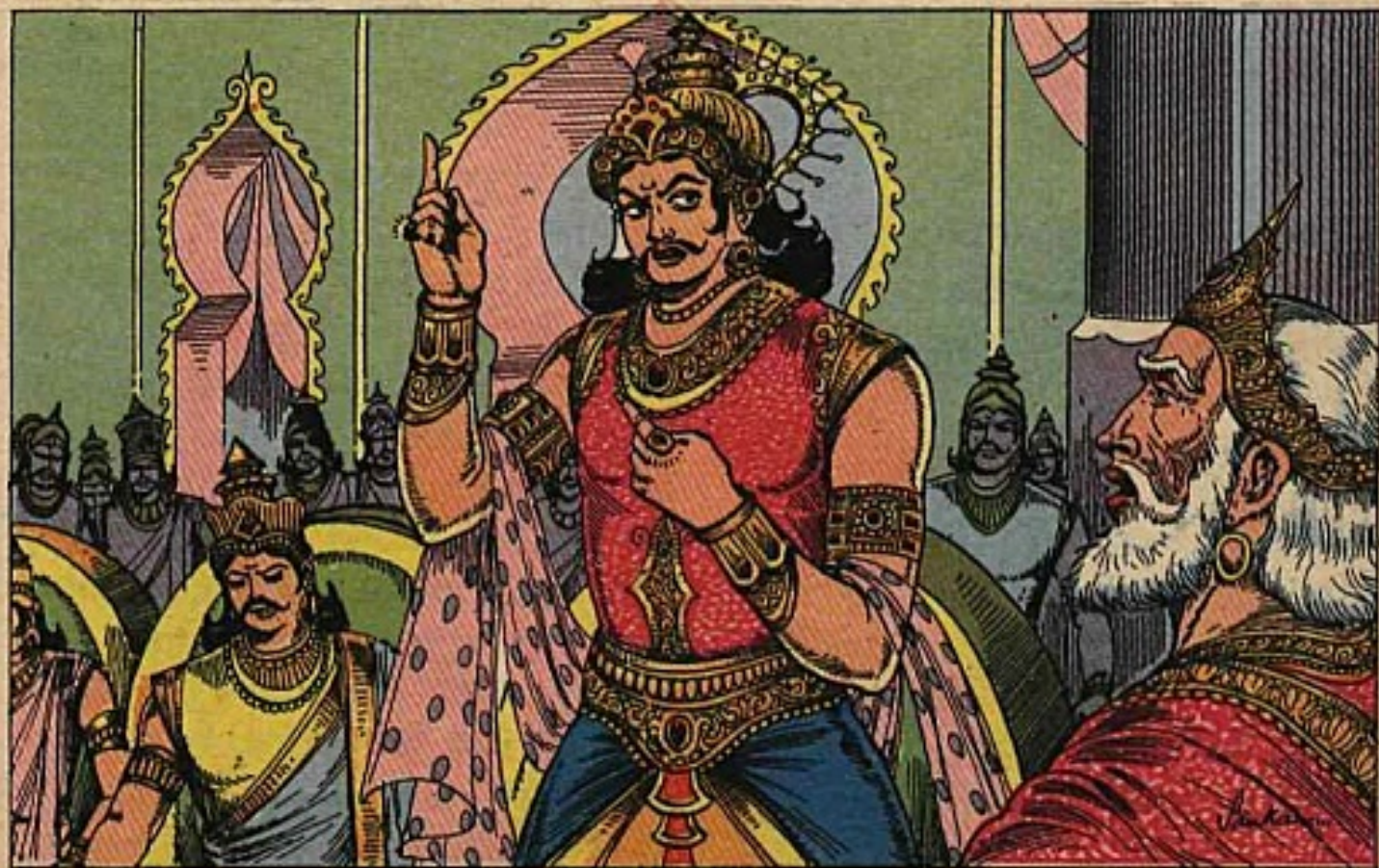
Sanjaya gave him a detailed account of the strength of the Pandavas armies. When Dhritarashtra realised that the Pandavas were gathering in a formidable array, his heart quailed and turning to Duryodhana, he quavered "Duryodhana, have you heard? Your cousins are too well prepared. Let there be no war! If you seek peace, instead of war, people will speak highly of you. Surely, you can live content with half my territory! Give the other half to the Pandavas and end all quarrel. Do not

Duryodhana maintains that the Pandavas would be defeated

be blind to your fate."

But Duryodhana brushing aside these words, boasted, "I know how to crush the Pandavas. I don't need anyone's help. Karna and Duhshasana are enough for my purpose. We three will root out the Pandavas. There can be no talk of peace between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Never. Not a blade of grass will I give to them."

Karna approving these words exclaimed grandly, "Right. Duryodhana is absolutely right. We can win the war easily. I alone can defeat the Pandavas.





**Duryodhana refuses to
give the Pandavas anything**

I need no one's aid in this." At these vain words, Bhishma remarked icily, "Karna, don't be a fool. You don't realise what you are saying. Everyone here knows about the powers of Arjuna and Lord Krishna. Your words only betray your low mentality."

Bhishma's contempt stung Karna to the quick and he thought that the former had slighted him. So he flared up, and said angrily, "Very well, if both Krishna and Arjuna are that powerful, go and fight them yourself. As long as you lead the Kaurava army, I shall

have no part in it. When you cease to be the General of the army, then I shall display my valour." With these words, Karna stalked out of the court furiously.

Bhishma smiled contemptuously and said, "There you are, Duryodhana! Even to fight the enemies, he dictates terms to us. We have not yet drawn up our battle plans, and Karna has already backed out of the fight. How can he hope to win against the Pandava host all by himself? There are so many great Warriors in this court and yet he boasts he is the greatest. Such words can only do harm to our cause. After all, what can we expect from the man who tried to pass himself off for a brahmin before sage Parasurama?"

But Duryodhana replied haughtily, "What is wrong in Karna's words? The Pandavas are no different from us. I need no one's aid in fighting against them. I can take them on single-handed."

Then, Vidura, the Wise spoke up. "Duryodhana, Don't be hasty. Let me tell you the tale of the hunter who caught two birds in his net. Undaunted they flew up with his net,

and the hunter ran after them. Seeing this strange spectacle of the hunter running on the ground after the two flying birds, a hermit stopped him and said, "Oh! Hunter, of what use is it for you to run on the ground if you want to catch those flying birds?"

The hunter replied, "Oh! Holy Sir, as long as the two birds fly amicably, I have no hope of catching them. But should they quarrel they'll come down and I can easily capture them."

So it happened. The birds

came down and were caught by the hunter. Therefore, be warned. When two brothers quarrel, someone else will reap the benefit. So the Pandavas and the Kauravas should not fight. I am reminded of the story of those who ran to get the honey from a honeycomb found in a perilous valley and perished in the attempt. If for the sake of some territories you fight against the Pandavas, do you realise what will happen then? Not a single life will be spared. In that holocaust, everyone will perish."





The Wonderful Bird

One night, Ta Khai, who was the Prince of Tartary, a country near China, had a strange dream.

He dreamed that he saw a very beautiful maiden. He had never seen her before, but he was sure she must be a princess and he longed to know her and find out who she was, but to his despair, before he could move or speak, she had gone.

When he awoke, he remembered her face vividly, although he had only seen her for a moment and he called for ink and brushes and a piece of fine silk to be brought to him, for these were the materials which

the people of that area used for painting their pictures. Then on the piece of silk, the prince drew a picture of the beautiful girl, just as he had seen her in his dream.

He called all his ministers in and asked if they knew who she was, but they shook their heads in bewilderment, for they had never seen her before.

Next, all his courtiers were brought to look at the picture, but they did not know who she was either.

The people around were questioned but no one had ever heard tell of such a beautiful maiden.

The wise men and magicians were called in, too, but they were all sent away in disgrace, so dismal were their failures, for not one could tell the prince who the girl might be or where she might be found.

Finally, Ta Khai had the portrait placed in the courtyard, so that any traveller passing through would see it and perhaps be able to tell him where he could find his lovely princess, but many weeks passed and still no one had recognised her.

Ta Khai became very unhappy. He could not sleep and he could not eat and he neglected his duties as ruler of the country. He spent all his time wandering in the countryside around his palace, lonely and miserable.

One day, he was standing on the edge of a precipice, gazing unhappily down and thinking how miserable his life had become, when a bird flew across the valley and perched on the rock in front of him. This was bird called Feng, a beautiful bird, which glowed like a fire of many colours.

"Why do you sit here alone and miserable, neglecting your duties and leaving your people

to rule themselves?" asked Feng.

The prince explained about the wonderful girl he had seen in his dream and how he despaired of ever finding her, for no one could tell him who she was.

"I search for her night and day," he said, "for I am too



unhappy to live without her."

"I can make myself large enough to carry the biggest town on my back," said the bird. "Yet if I wish I can also become small enough to pass through the tiniest key-hole and I know all the princesses in all the palaces of the world, for I have travelled far. I have taught them to sing like me and I am their friend, so show me your picture. Perhaps I can tell you whom you seek."

Ta Khai rushed back to his palace at once and quickly returned with his picture. When Feng saw the picture, he puffed out his feathers and grew until he was as big as a horse.

"Get on my back," said Feng. "This is the face of Sai Jen, the daughter of the Emperor of China. She is as beautiful as the moon. I will take you to the palace where she lives."

Ta Khai sat on the bird's back and was carried swiftly over mountain and valley, until they came to a magnificent garden. Feng dropped to the ground outside the garden. Inside it was Sai Jen, singing and playing her lute.

Feng showed the prince how to make a flute of bamboo for himself and told him to accompany the princess, as she sang her song, on his flute.

When Sai Jen heard the sweet notes of the flute coming from outside the garden, she cried out, "I can hear the distant notes of my song played sweetly back to me but I can see only the flowers and the trees."

Then the bird Feng fluttered down to where the princess sat and dropped the portrait at her feet. She looked at it in amazement and said, "Tell me, Feng, where is he who knows the sound of my voice but has never heard me and can draw a picture of my face, but has never seen me?"

Sai Jen asked Feng to bring the young prince into the garden and when she saw him, she fell in love with him at once. Feng was so pleased, that he made all the flowers in the garden glow like stars.

To Ta Khai, Princess Sai Jen seemed far lovelier to look at than she had been in his dream and he wanted to marry her and take her back to his kingdom of Tartary.

Sai Jen led the young prince to the palace, where her father

and mother were waiting to welcome him and Ta Khai at once bowed to the ground in front of the Emperor and asked for the hand of the beautiful princess in marriage.

The Emperor of China liked Ta Khai at once and thought he could not have a finer son-in-law. He agreed that the marriage should take place immediately and so it was arranged.

It was the most magnificent wedding which the people of China had ever seen.

When it was over, the couple stayed for a time with the Emperor and Empress of China, but soon Ta Khai said that he

must return to Tartary, to see what had been happening in his own country during his absence, so the young couple said goodbye and started on the long journey back to Tartary.

When they arrived, all the courtiers and all the people were overjoyed to find that Ta Khai had at last found his princess and everyone agreed that she was far more beautiful even than her portrait had shown.

For many long years, Ta Khai and his princess ruled their country wisely and well and all the people came to love the beautiful Sai Jen.





In Search of a Good Teacher

Long ago, a rich merchant named Vanidas wanted to educate his only son Chandra and turn him into a great scholar. For this purpose he looked around for a suitable teacher, but none was available in that village. Then he heard about a famous scholar called Perunjyothi who lived far away from that village. This learned man taught many and was considered to be well versed in all the arts and sciences.

Vanidas was overjoyed that at last he had found a good teacher for his son, but first he wanted to test the depth of knowledge which the latter possessed. So he set out from his village to see and reassure himself about the vastness of

Perunjyothi's learning.

When Vanidas reached the residence of the scholar, he learnt that the latter had gone to bathe in the nearby river. So the merchant asked that he be taken to the river as he too wanted to bathe and clean himself. The scholar's young son agreed to guide him and they walked towards the river. On arriving there, Vanidas saw that Perunjyothi had finished bathing. He accosted him and said, "Of the two chief colours, you prefer the second one, isn't it?"

The scholar replied, "Both are needed. You can't have one without the other."

Vanidas turned to the scholar's son and asked, "Boy,

do you know what your father is saying." He replied, "Sir, you wished to know which was better, night or day, and my father answered that both were important, as you can't have one without the other."

Vanidas again turned to the scholar and said, "Full twelve you are, yet why should you suffer at six?"

Perunjyothi replied, "The thirty-two that grew at my birth then fell off and those that grew again are still with me."

Vanidas looked enquiringly at the little boy who promptly explained, "Sir, you asked why my father should suffer like this at six in the morning especially in the winter of his life, and he replied that his teeth were still intact and that he was physically very sound."

Then Vanidas said, "Are there people who pull their houses down and then rebuild them?"

Perunjyothi replied, "Four people who have retired now were engaged in that occupation. Now their relations are carrying on the tradition."

Again the little boy explained, "Sir, you wanted to know how many sons my father had and



he replied that they were four who had given him many grandchildren."

Vanidas thoroughly excited by this exchange shot another question at the old man.

"Sir, Are you likely to marry a beautiful girl soon?"

Perunjyothi replied, "No. If I marry now, I shall have to give her lots of nice clothes and lovely jewels. Besides, I have a daughter and there is no need for me to bring another girl into my house."

Even before Vanidas could quiz the little boy, he came up with, "Sir, you asked my father whether he would borrow money and he replied that he



was content with what he had. There was no need to accumulate wealth by borrowing when he had enough put away."

Vanidas tried once more, "How is it that instead of trying for the karpaka tree, you are still holding on to a tiny branch?"

The old man smiled and said, "Even the great karpaka tree is made up of many such tiny branches."

The lad interposed and said, "Sir, you wanted to know why my father, instead of living in the royal court, continues to live in this far off village. He said that the royal court is

there because of the village. Great things flourish because they contain within them tiny particles of infinite value."

As the lad finished speaking, Perunjyothi's three year old grand daughter came dashing up the path. She began to pester her grandfather with all kinds of questions.

Vanidas was greatly surprised at the cleverness of the little child. So he said to her, "Child, shall I ask you a question too?"

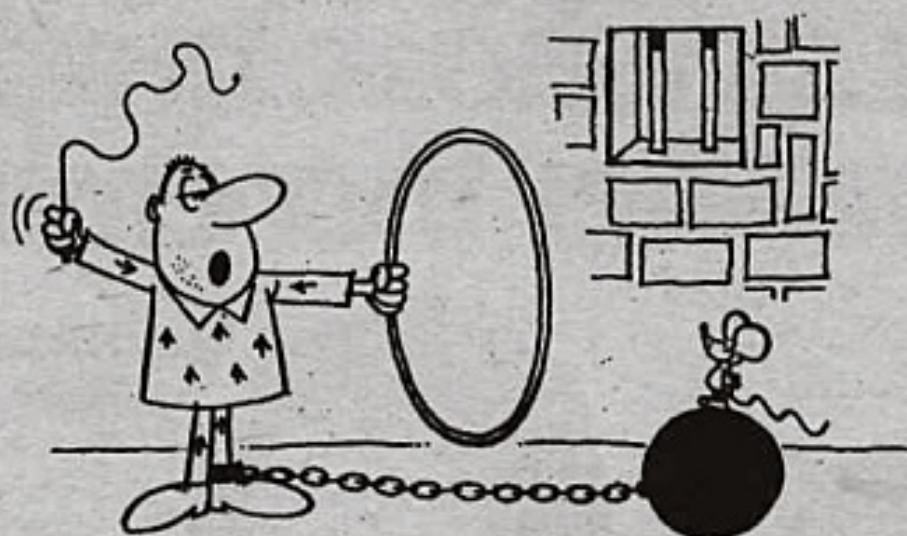
The child cocked her eyebrow and said, "Sure, go ahead."

"How can one stop speaking?" he asked.

The child replied, "By yelling all the time!"

Then she ran towards her home. Vanidas laughed heartily at the clever remark. He was now thoroughly convinced that the old scholar was a worthy teacher for his son. So he said to Perunjyothi, "Sir, you are the best teacher for my son. Pray accept him as your pupil from today on."

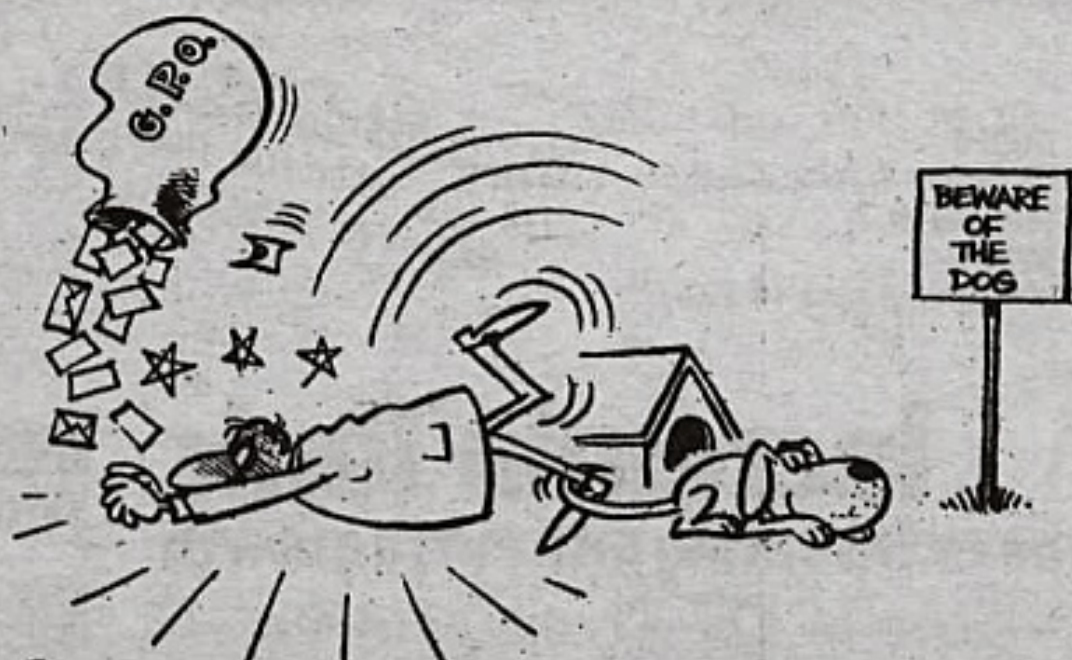
Perunjyothi agreed to teach Chandra, and so on a bright day Vanidas's son began to learn the three Rs under a renowned scholar.



"Jump, Rajah!"



1



2

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Wild Life



S for Serval found among the long grass and scrubland of the African plains. Unlike most other members of